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THE OLD MASTERS

BYZANTINE - GOTHIC - RENAISSANCE - BAROQUE

7
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BYZANTINE - GOTHIC - RENAISSANCE - BAROQUE

7 BY
C. LORGUES-LAPOUGE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY
ANTHONY RHODES

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BYZANTINE PAINTER 6th Century. Rebecca and Eliazar
Miniature from the Vienna Genesis. National Library, Vienna

CHRISTIAN ART

From time immemorial, the plastic arts have revealed how man has developed historically, with the passage of the centuries. But painting and the graphic arts have been more concerned with him socially, depicting his life throughout the ages too, but in a religious, philosophical or profane setting.

Christian art was born in the gloom of the catacombs, those sanctuaries of an occult and persecuted faith of which Rome still preserves a remnant in the clumsily painted but deeply moving frescoes of the catacomb of Comodilla. (pl. 13) With the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., after Constantine's victory over Maxentius, a new era opened. Christianity flourished, and basilicas sprang up at the orders of the Emperor from one end of his domains to the other. In Jerusalem, the discovery of the Holy Sepulchre (and of the Cross by Saint Helen), inspired the multitudes with a new faith, and gave the first impulse to the Crusades. Pilgrims erected sanctuaries all along the roads to the Holy Sepulchre, to welcome the believers who flocked from every corner of the known world.

Constantinople, founded on the boundary of Europe and Asia, presented in its basilicas, its visions in shimmering gold and mosaic inspired by the Old and New Testaments, all the trappings of the new religion. Here then, in the first decades of

*The Triumph
of Byzantine
Art*

the fourth century, are the beginnings of a purely religious iconography. A letter from Saint Nil explains that the image of the Cross must be depicted, along with scenes from the two Testaments, because, "for illiterate persons incapable of reading the Scriptures the paintings will recall the actions of the faithful servants of God, and stimulate these persons to imitation". The artists were called upon to create a continuous passing pageant of events, in essence historical, but employing a series of marvellous shapes and forms, painted on the walls, partly in homage to God, partly as instruction for the faithful. The realism they brought to their task had no precedent, and for several centuries they were to stamp their image on the art of painting.

In Byzantine times, these evocations of a religious past had something supernatural; but throughout the Middle Ages, as religion approached nearer to everyday life, the illustrations become more human and, to make them more accessible to the public, the artists began to paint the biblical and evangelical characters almost as if they were contemporary persons, in familiar settings. Jesus Christ is no longer the beardless youth of the catacombs. He is a Syrian in the flower of manhood, his beard jet black, his appearance virile, his face full of sweetness yet oriental majesty, surrounded by his apostles. We see this in a fine mosaic in Rome.

But the great period of Byzantine art was the fifth century, when Ravenna had its hey-day under Justinian. In 409 A.D., under Honorius the master of the West, Ravenna had become the seat of empire – thanks to the fascination it exerted on the Emperor's sister, Galla Placidia, who succeeded him from 425 to 450 A.D. Her mausoleum is built in the form of a Greek Cross, and she lies serenely in a *mise-en-scène*, which is decorous yet in no way funereal, where the blue and gold of the mosaics sparkle like stars among the foliage of a rocky landscape, where dove-like birds drink from golden cups. This is the classical atmosphere, affluent yet restrained, for which the name of Ravenna, and the legend of Galla Placidia, are renowned. (pl. 12)

In this way Ravenna became the Byzantine capital, and at its height in 550 A.D., symbolised the double grandeur of Rome and Byzantium. Here the masterpiece of late antique art, the church of San Vitale, was built. The wonderful mosaics of Justinian surrounded by his court dignitaries, and of "Theodora with the Princesses of her court", are two revelations of how history can be painted, where certain faces possess all the qualities of the portrait-painter, but are overlaid with that solemn immobility of expression which is the hall-mark of the East. (pl. 22) "Theodora wearing the imperial crown", with a shimmering string of pearls, on her shoulders, and her robes sumptuously embroidered with the Adoration of the Magi, is a life-like portrait, aptly described as "a reality which seems poetic". The Ravenna portraitists were doubtless inspired by the extraordinary Egyptian faces of Fayum, ("Head of a Man") which were only death masks. (pl. 9)

In 535 A.D., Justinian's general Belisar conquered the ancient land of Magna Graecia (Sicily and Southern Italy), and in 783 A.D., the Sicilian church returned to the patriarchal fold in Constantinople. Although from the eleventh century onward, the Byzantine domination had been replaced by the arab, and in the twelfth century the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had become a fief of the Norman *condottieri*, the art of Byzantium still ruled supreme. The cathedral of Cefalù, which was begun by Roger II in 1131 A.D., is only a little anterior to the Palatine chapel. (pl. 11) Here, the huge figure of the "Pantocrator", surrounded by the Virgin and angels, rises majestically at the end of a long vista in the cathedral nave. (pl. 15)

CARLOVINGIAN
PAINTER
About 820
The Four
Evangelists
Miniature
on Parchment
Cathedral Treasury
Aachen, Germany



The Palatine Chapel of Palermo, a jewel-box of scintillating gold and blue, was decorated in two phases, in 1140 and 1160 A.D., with a host of hierarchical characters, whose elongated faces and wide-sleeved, loosely hung dalmatics recall the figures of Saint Basil and Saint John Chrysostome. (pl. 11)

Many works of art scattered throughout the Mediterranean basin bear witness to the grandeur of mosaic art in the eleventh century. In the Nea Moni of Chios, persons associated with the life of Jesus are boldly depicted against a background of dazzling gold.

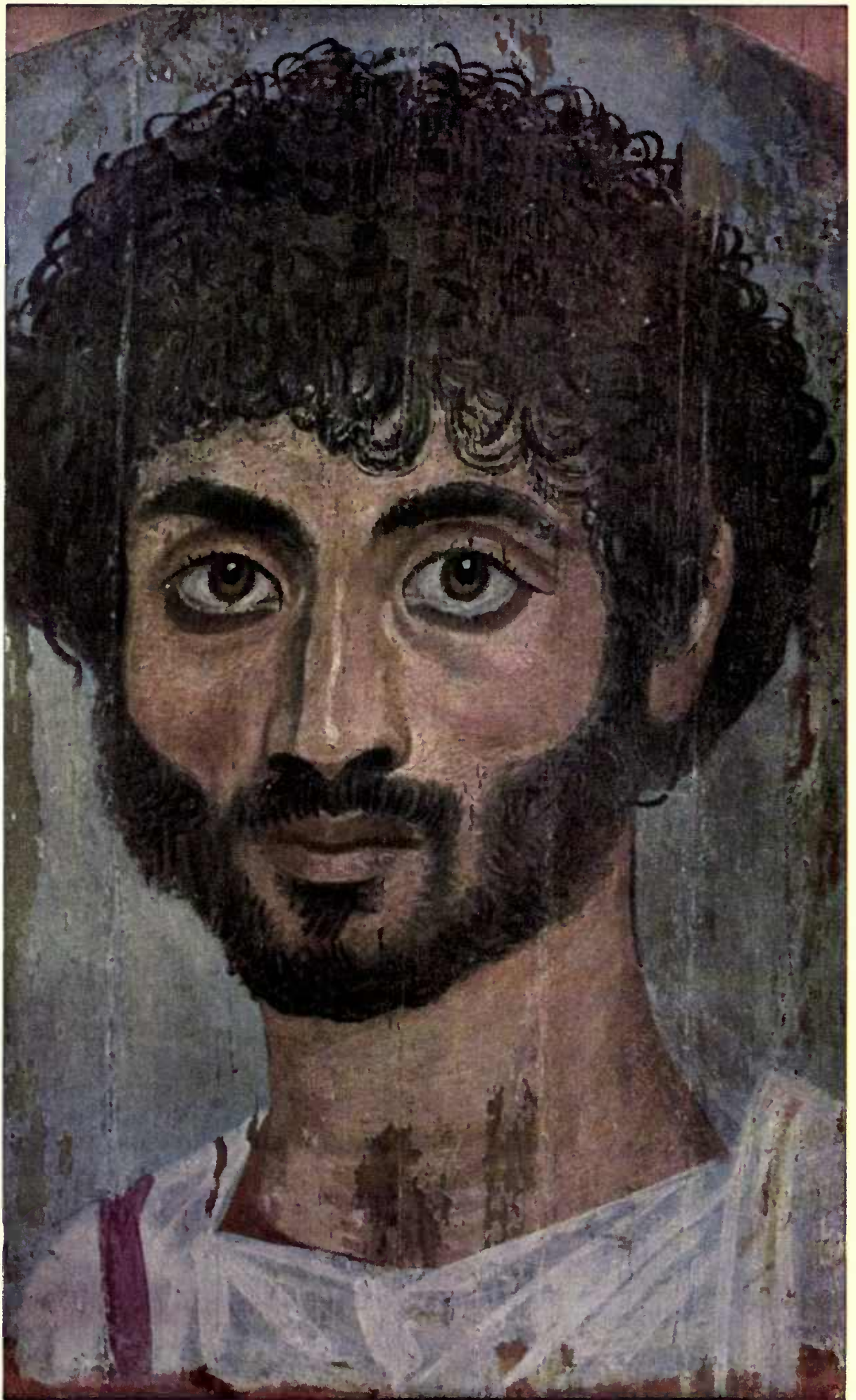
The progress of the arts in Byzantium was due in part to the vicissitudes of the seventh and eighth century iconoclasts; although they were equally responsible for the flight of the mosaics to Italy. In spite of this, the city which had been the cradle of Byzantine art, regained some of its artistic prestige in the tenth and eleventh



OTTONIAN PAINTER
 End of 10th Century
 The Annunciation
 Miniature
 from the Sacramentary
 of St. Jerome in Cologne
 Parchment
 Bibl. Nationale, Paris

centuries – as the glistening golds and blues of the wonderful mosaic in Saint Sophia reveal. In spite of somewhat severe and conventional treatment, there is a truly imposing quality about the Protective Virgin and the Child Jesus. (pl. 10) Here is one of the first examples of that cult of the Virgin which, as its subject became increasingly painted by the artists of the Middle Ages, took a deep hold on the popular imagination.

In 1204 A.D., the siege of Constantinople ushered in the Latin empire of Constantinople, and in 1261 A.D., Michael Paleologus took possession of the city. He had himself crowned in Saint Sophia, and placed the Eastern church under the authority of the Pope. After the pillage of the city and the disaster of the Crusades, it seemed unlikely that Byzantium would ever found a school of art again. In fact, the period of Paleologian rule coincides with a remarkable artistic renaissance. To this era we owe the Grecian monuments at Mistra, in Macedonia, Mount Athos,



ROME-EGYPTIAN
PAINTER
2nd Century
Picture
on a Mummy-
case from Fayum
Wax painting on wood
Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York



BYZANTINE PAINTER 10th Century. The Child Jesus. Detail of the Protecting Virgin Mosaic. Saint Sophia, Constantinople



BYZANTINE PAINTER 12th Century. Saint Basil and Saint Jean Chrysostome
Mosaic. The Palatine Chapel, Palermo



RAVENNA MASTER Beginning of the 6th Century. Birds, as a Symbol of the Souls, Drink the Water of Life
Mosaic. The Chapel of Galla Placidia, Ravenna



ROMAN PAINTER 6th Century.
 Enthroned Madonna. St. Adauktus and St. Felix with the Bequeather
 Mural. Comodilla Catacomb, Rome



BYZANTINE MASTER Middle of 11th Century. Christ: Detail of the Descent to Limbo
Mosaic. Church of "Nea Moni", Chios



BYZANTINE PAINTER 12th Century. The Pantocrator. Mosaic. Cathedral of Cefalù, Sicily



MASTER OF REIMS About 1200 Crucifixion
Stained Glass Window. Church of St. Remi, Reims

GIRARD
OF ORLEANS
(Attributed)
About 1360
King John
the Good
Tempera on wood
Louvre, Paris



and the wonderful church of Chora in Constantinople, (today the mosque of Kahri). This church was decorated at the beginning of the fifteenth century through the good offices of Theodore Metochitis, who is himself depicted in one of the paintings, donating the church to Christ. In the nartex, various events in the life of Christ, and of the Virgin, are depicted in opulent surroundings. In all these compositions, the human figures are shown against a variety of backgrounds, architectural and rural, picturesque and dramatic, in which the mosaicist, who concentrates above all on the female form, is lavish with familiar details. Also "The Journey to Bethlehem" is a pictorial report on the Holy Family's quest for a resting-place on the eve of the Messiah's birth. (pl. 19)

May we not then claim that, together with the mosaics, the graphic arts and the art of the miniaturists, both still bearing traces of the Greek afflatus, present the best portrait of life under the Byzantine empire? The illuminated manuscript was invented by the ancient Egyptians when they wished to illustrate the Book of the Dead; and Greek Alexandria of the Ptolomys inherited the tradition from the Pharaohs. The most ancient illuminated manuscripts we still possess date back no further than the fifth and sixth centuries of our era. They are painted, as are the mural paintings of scenes from the Old Testament, with a realism in which no detail is lacking – in, for instance, the illustrations of the Genesis in Vienna. In this painting, Rebecca has drawn the water which she is offering to Eliazar from the fountain, and the nymph of the source is lying beside it. (pl. 5)

The same kind of realism is to be found in the famous Greek psalter of the

CATALAN PAINTER 12th Century. Christ and the Apostles. Antependium
Tempera on wood. Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona





BYZANTINE MASTER 14th Century. The Journey to Bethlehem
Mosaic from the Narthex of Chora Church, Constantinople

Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (tenth century), in which the finest miniatures are copies of originals from the sixth century, but are still impregnated with the distinction of antiquity. Here, Ezechia receives inspiration from a Goddess representing Night, and from a child who bears a torch which symbolises Dawn. (pl. 23)

The extension of the Byzantine empire to the Exarchate of Sicily and Ravenna, and the marriage of the German emperor Otto II contributed to the spread of Byzantine art in Germany, as well as in Italy. Both countries possess manuscripts which reveal the influence of the finest work from the Byzantine studios. This influence is to be seen clearly in the miniature "The Four Evangelists" in the Aachen cathedral treasure, as in the works of the mediaeval artists of Cologne. "The Annunciation of the prayer-book of Saint Jerome" is another example of this. At the same time there are, in the Cologne artists, clear signs of a tendency to imitate the antique painters. (pl. 7, 8)

Charlemagne's political achievement gave birth to Romanesque painting, and there are few parts of Europe which have benefited more from it than Catalonia. In the ninth century, this part of Spain belonged politically to the Carolingian empire and was a great cultural centre – thanks to the unusual erudition of the Emperor himself. (pl. 18)

Legitur in exodo qd
pharao. in seare
filios isrl cum aurib
et equis in mare post filios isrl et
dñs reduxit eos paq
maris et ita libavit po
pulum suu sicut enim
paquas maris dñs po
pulu liberavit. Et in
nunciis psequitis. ita ne
paquas baptismales
a xpo consecratas ipm
amniculis liberamur.

Stonab: saluato. Innotis bñdi



Dñ baptizat xpo baptisma

Legitur in iudic nūcy
qui missi erant ad ex
plorandam terram pñ
illam cum redirent pre
ciderent locum que duo
portauerūt inuete et tra
sio iordane adduxerunt
in testimoniu bonitatis
illius terre q scm bene
pfigurabat illud uidelicet
qd nos qui ad terram pro
missionis regni celestis i
trare uolumus paquas ba
ptismales a xpo consecras
nos transire.

flum trāsire et pñu niell
adit.



Aqm mda z m. Iudic illa est scs

Stundis sic

Ezechiel

Zacharias

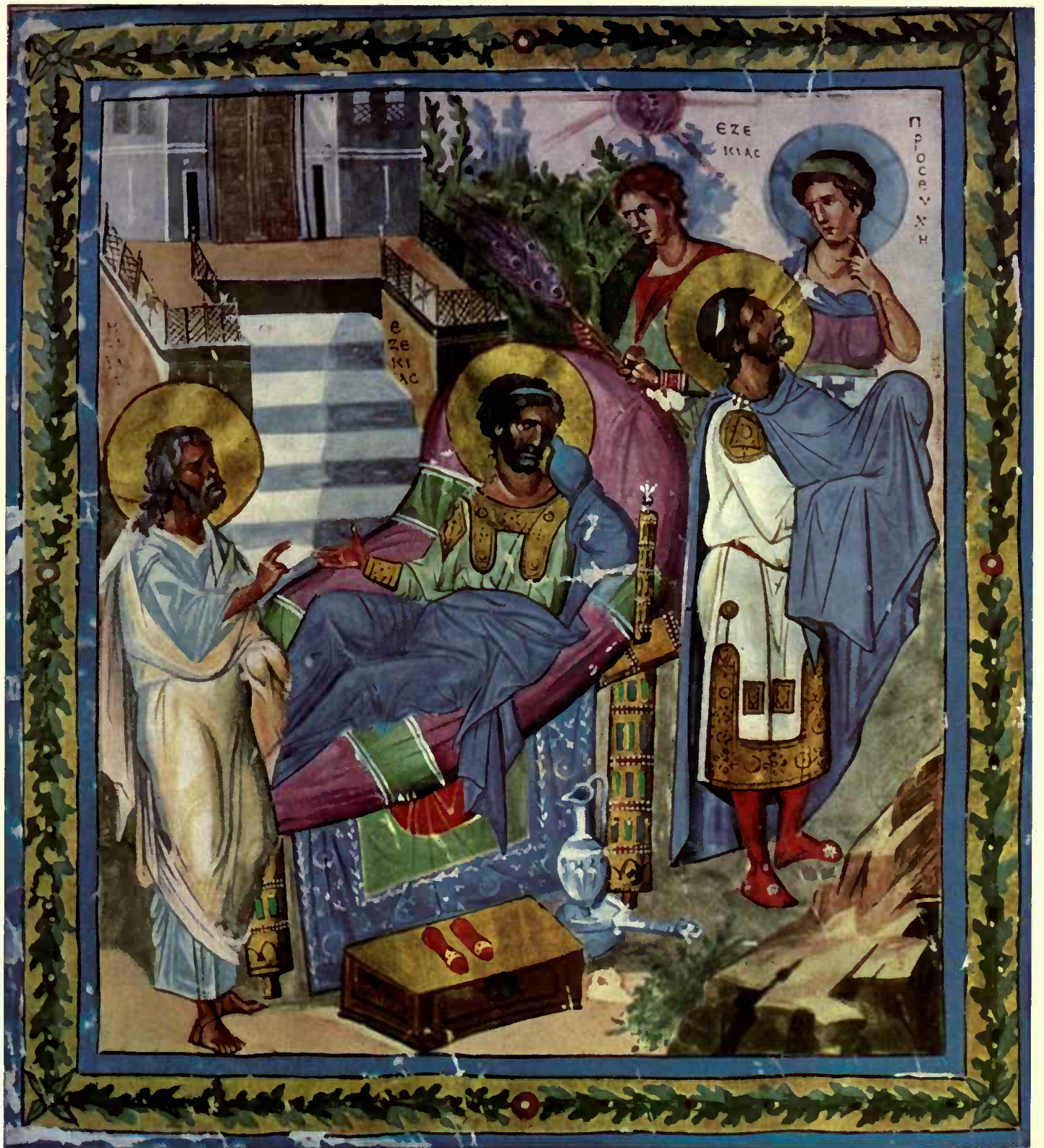
ponit dñs

AUSTRIAN MASTER 14th Century. Baptism of Jesus
Pen Drawing on parchment. Museum of Art, Budapest



MASTER OF INGEBURGE About 1200 The Burial of Christ and the Women Mourning
Illumination. Condé Museum, Chantilly

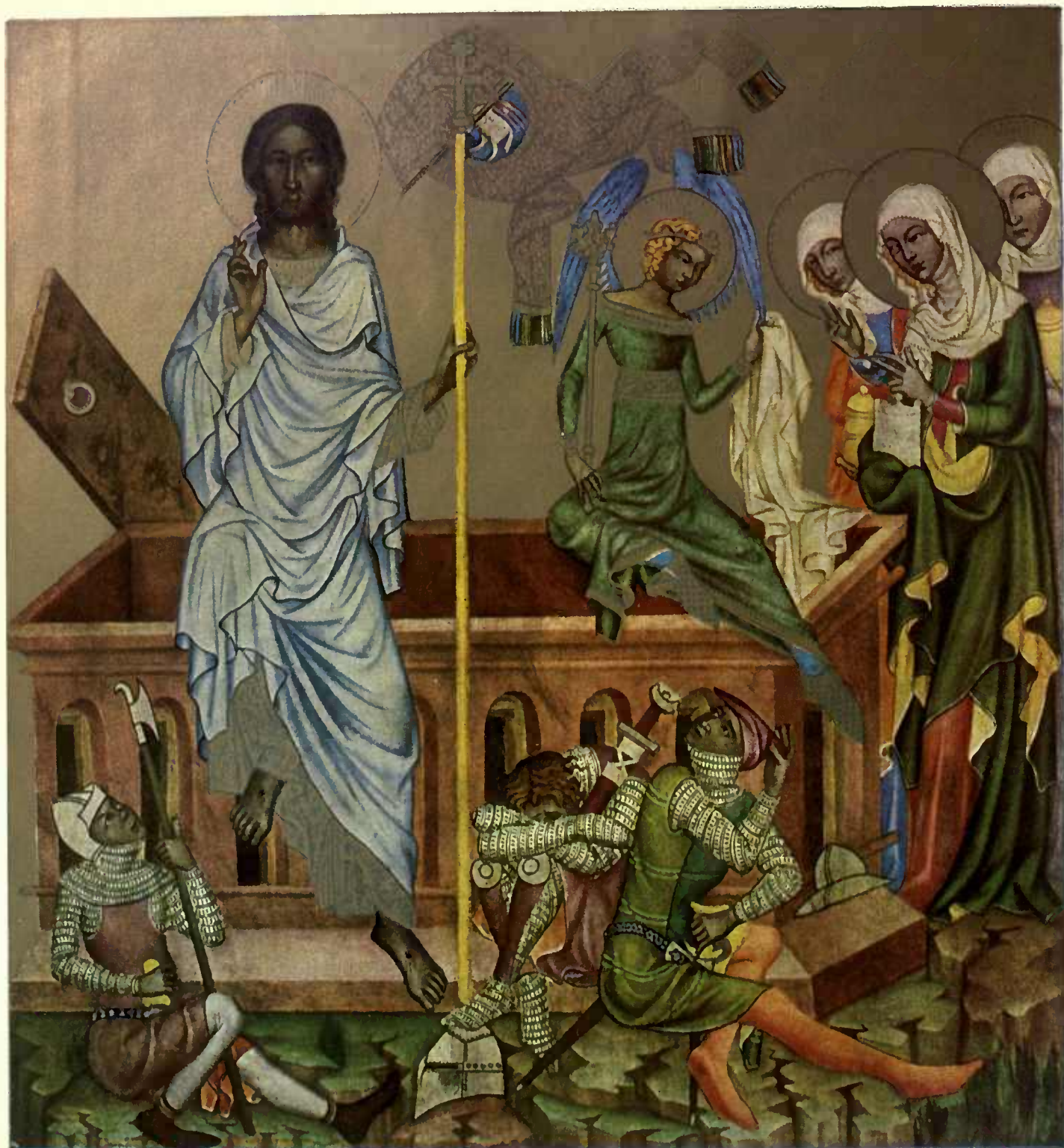




BYZANTINE PAINTER 10th century. Ezechias, as a Sick Man and His Miraculous Healing
Miniature from Greek Psalter (139) Bibl. Nationale, Paris

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BYZANTINE PAINTER Middle of 6th Century. Empress Theodora (Detail)
Mosaic. St. Vital, Ravenna



MASTER OF HOHENFURTH Middle of 14th Century *Bohemia* The Resurrection of Christ
Altar Panel from the Cistercian Abbey at Hohenfurth. State Collection of Old Art, Prague

MASTER OF BOHEMIA About 1400 Saint Margaret
Chinese Ink. Esterhazy Collection, Budapest





ANONYMOUS 16th Century
Germany
The "Minnesaengers"
Miniature

The political genius of Charlemagne permitted this outlying province to welcome the artistic movements of south-western France, Italy and Byzantium, with the result that between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, only this northern part of the Iberian peninsula remained impervious to Islam. Here, the art of Christianity flourished. One of the finest works of this period is the group in Saint Clement of Tahull, the "Christ in Majesty" in the apse, a scene open to the skies which shows the apocalyptic Pantocrator in a *mandorle* set with precious gems.

The same conventional quality is to be seen in the paintings on wood which were being produced as late as the middle of the thirteenth century. "Christ Among the Apostles" of the Antependium, (altar veil) in the apse of Tahull was reproduced on wood in more modest dimensions. It shows the Pentecost, in which the afflatus of the Holy Ghost is suggested by the apostles who seem to be hovering in the air, half suspended, and by the curious swelling of their tunics. This belongs to the



MASTER OF THE ENGLISH COURT About 1377 Richard II before the Madonna
Oil on wood. National Gallery, London

transition period now opening, in which we see remnants of archaism, but in which a new iconographic treatment can be felt in the handling of the individual figures. (pl. 51)

THE MIDDLE AGES

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the artistic prestige of the East declined and France became the cynosure of catholic christianity. France had been an entity, culturally as well as politically, since the end of the ninth century, for the Capetian state had been established and the language, freed at last from its latin bonds, had given the world its first works of art. French civilisation, benefitting from the Crusades in Spain, had spread over the known world. Paris, helped by the authority of the Sorbonne, to which students flocked from all over Europe, was, in the words of Cardinal Eudes de Chateauroux, "the oven in which is baked the intellectual bread of all humanity", while Saint Bonaventure saw in the French capital "the fountain of all knowledge". No less important was the role played by the big monasteries. The Benedictine movement of Cluny, founded in 910 A.D., and spurred on by the energetic guidance of Saint Odilon and Saint Hugo, soon spread its ramifications all over Europe. In England, they are to be seen in Saint Pancreas of Lewes; in Germany, at Hirsau and Paderborn; above all in Spain, at Compostella, where

France



PIETRO CAVALLINI 1250-1330
Italy
Christ from the
"Last Judgement" (Detail).
About 1310
Mural. Church of St. Cecilia, Rome

the pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James, and the Crusades against the Moors, were inaugurated.

We see then that the art of the twelfth century was primarily monastic. The artists were not necessarily monks, but the subjects were almost always dictated by them.

The illuminated manuscript, often the work of a monk attracted by the art of illustration, was still one of the artistic treasures of the convents. Among the most celebrated of these is the "Apocalypse of Saint Severus", a commentary on the Apocalypse composed in 784 A.D. by Beatus, the abbot of Liebana in Spain.

Hidden in the Asturias where the arab invasion had just been barred, this monk commented on the gospel of Saint John as if he was announcing the end of the world. His book was adopted by the church, which had it recopied every century and decorated with miniatures dating from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. (pl. 35)

Until the thirteenth century, illumination was the perquisite of the monks, the *scriptoria* of the monasteries, as they were called. But secular practitioners now appeared. In Paris, the illuminators of manuscripts, living in what was then the latin quarter, in the neighbourhood of rue Bouteliere and the church of Saint Severinus, allowed women known as *enlumneresses* to join their corporations.



FRA ANGELICO 1387-1455 *Italy* Annunciation. About 1438
Tempera on wood. City Museum, Cortona

But the illuminated works still retain a certain religious flavour, to be seen in the many illuminated choir-books, Books of the Hours, and collections of prayers for the use of the laity. "The Psalter of Queen Ingeborge" (the wife of Philippe Auguste) contains some delicate illuminated pages, including a detailed scene from the life of Jesus which is portrayed with iridescent colours on a golden background. (pl. 21)

From the reign of Philippe Auguste onwards, and particularly under Saint Louis and Philippe the Handsome, the importance of the Parisian miniature increases, but only in so far as it was directly connected with the University, whose student membership drawn from all over Europe increased yearly. This meant that the number of illuminated manuscripts was always increasing.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were remarkable too for the cult of the stained-glass window. As Saint Denis, Nôtre Dame, the Sainte Chapelle and Reims cathedral reveal, this art flourished in Paris, and the Ile de France. If the miniature

is addressed to a small elite of connoisseurs, the stained-glass window, with its large-scale stories of biblical history unfolding against the wide expanse of the skies, has something which appeals to the unlettered. So vivid were the colours of the glass, that the great intellects of the time are continually comparing them to precious stones. Suger speaks of stained-glass made of "sapphire"; Theophile, the technician-monk, marvels at its inestimable value; the poets dream aloud of buildings made of crystal. "The windows were rich with strange tones, such as had never been seen before, luminous crystals whose glory had never been surpassed..."

The generosity of the faithful was inexhaustible in providing stained-glass for the churches. Suger relates that the collecting-box for the glass placed in the Abbey church of Saint Denis was always full. The guilds and corporate bodies continually presented the cathedrals with stained-glass, on which they would have themselves depicted working at their respective trades. Kings, noblemen, bishops and Chapter-Houses also presented stained-glass windows bearing their coats-of-arms, equestrian figures, or allegorical compositions.

Like the fresco-makers, the glass-masters also obeyed certain laws of composition. Where the windows were placed low on the walls, permitting the onlooker to view them from close, they showed well populated scenes with human-beings in the squares or quadrilobes. Where the windows were high above the ground, they decorated them with large figures, clearly separated from each other, as in the Crucifixion in the church of Saint Remi of Reims. Here, the three tragic human figures of the Calvary stand out against a background of sapphire and ruby. (pl. 16) The production of stained-glass windows continued on into the fifteenth century, when they again glowed with all the radiant beauty of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

These three forms of animated decorative art exerted a great influence on the major arts of the Middle Ages, in particular on architecture and sculpture in the big cathedrals. Master-craftsmen constantly borrowed from the miniaturist the subjects which they sculptured in the Romanesque tympanums. For the great statues over the Gothic doorways, as in Chartres, they took as models the stained-glass windows.

Just as all over France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the influence of the great Cluniac and Cistercian orders was felt, so in England the big abbeys extended their religious power. The Norman conquest, and the close relations with the continent which followed it, could only favour French influence in England – to be seen in the illuminated page of the "Christ of the Apocalypse", a miniature on parchment. Christ is here depicted in a *mandorle*, and the setting is composed of symbolic emblems of the Evangelists and twenty-four old men. Beneath, the feast of "Easter" is recalled, in the form of a familiar scene with troubadours playing the viol and harp, as if they were performing at the court of some nobleman. The elegant drawing of the human figures derives directly from the works of the Paris school. (pl. 37)

French influence penetrated England even more during the Hundred Years war, when English art-lovers were in the habit of ordering works of art direct from France. This is confirmed by Froissart in his history: "Several excellent works of art went to the realm of England". The celebrated diptych of Richard II (about 1377) reveals all the signs of this continental influence. (pl. 27)

marked by the poetic expression of the "Little Flowers of Saint Francis".

As in other western countries where art was strongly influenced by religion, Italian art was also affected, by the preaching of Saint Francis. The interminable political rivalry of the priesthood and the Empire had brought about a kind of mystical reaction in Italy, the need for a more personal kind of religion. The extraordinary method of preaching of Saint Francis satisfied this need, and gave a new afflatus to Italy, in particular to the regions of Umbria and Tuscany where the spiritual fruits of the Middle Ages had accumulated. His tender and easily approached manner, his familiar and affectionate way of addressing the divinities, disturbed as well as rejuvenated the traditional attitude towards religion. His way with crowds, his love of nature, his canticle to the sun, his sermons to the birds, all the preaching of the *Poverello*, deeply stirred the Italians. Later when the legend of Saint Francis received its famous pictorial forms, it was from the work-shops of Assisi that they were given to the world.

In 1211 A.D. Nicholas IV, the first Franciscan Pope, ascended the chair of Saint Peter and resolved "to have the church decorated and embellished". This had already been seen in Rome, in the magnificent cycle of frescoes in Santa Maria di



PETRUS CHRISTUS 1444-1472
Flanders
Portrait of a Young Woman
About 1450
Oil. State Museum, Berlin



MASTER OF AVIGNON About 1460. Pietà from Villeneuve-Les Avignon
Oil on wood. Louvre, Paris

Trastevere, and in the Saint Cecilia of Pietro Cavallini, in which the Christ of the Last Judgement, exhaling an Olympian majesty, appears as the God Judge. (pl. 28)

All the writings impregnated with Franciscan thought – the meditations on the Tree of the Cross by Saint Bonaventure, the ecstatic Hymns of Praise by Jacopo di Todi, who was intoxicated with the love of holy poverty, the Stabat Mater – these inspired and obsessed the artists when they were at work.

In the first years of the fourteenth century, Dante Alighieri composed his great poem, which reflects the life of the times, the feverish internecine struggles and rivalries of the Italian cities. In the Purgatory he meets a procession of shadows who walk with difficulty, bent beneath their loads, among whom is Cimabue, the great inspirer of Italian painters. Cimabue's work possesses a feeling of gravity and discretion, as well as a violence of emotion reminiscent of the Byzantine afflatus. We see this in his figure of the Prophet, the great symbol of Religion, who steps out of the Old Testament to announce the New.



ANONYMOUS About 1416-1492 *Flanders* Nativity
Panel of a Polyptych. Museum of Mayer Vanden Bergh, Antwerp



ANDRES MARSAL DE SAXE About 1400 Retable of Saint George
Panel of the Central Part. Victoria and Albert Museum, London



FRENCH MONK 11th Century. Alpha from the Apocalypse of Saint Sever Miniature on Parchment. Bibl. Nationale, Paris



MASTER BERTRAM 1345-1415 *Germany* Rest on the Flight to Egypt
Retable from Grabow, 1379. Hamburg Art Gallery, Hamburg



ENGLISH PAINTER About 1220 Christ of the Apocalypse
Miniature on Parchment. Trinity College, Cambridge



CIMABUE 1240-1302 *Italy* A Prophet. Oil. Detail (About 1280)
Tempera on wood. Uffizi Gallery, Florence

DUCCIO DI BONINSEGNA (About 1260-1318) *Italy* Christ and Magdalen. About 1308-1311
Panel from the Maesta of the High Altar of the Cathedral at Siena
Oil. Cathedral Museum, Siena





GIOTTO DI BONDONE 1266-1337 *Italy* Joachim with the Shepherds. About 1304
Mural in part Fresco. Detail. Arena Chapel, Padua

GIOTTO DI BONDONE 1266-1337 *Italy* Mary from the "Annunciation" About 1304
Mural in part Fresco. Arena Chapel, Padua





PIETRO LORENZETTI 1305-1348 *Italy* Madonna with the Child. About 1330
Mural in part Fresco. Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi



ANONYMOUS About 1390 Annunciation Tempera on wood. Arthur Sachs Collection, Cleveland, Ohio



ROGER
VAN DER WEYDEN
About 1400–1464
Flanders
Apparition of Christ
to His Mother
About 1430
Metropolitan
Museum of Art,
New York



SIMONE MARTINI 1283-1344 *Italy* St. Clara (Attributed) About 1330 (Detail)
Fresco. Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi



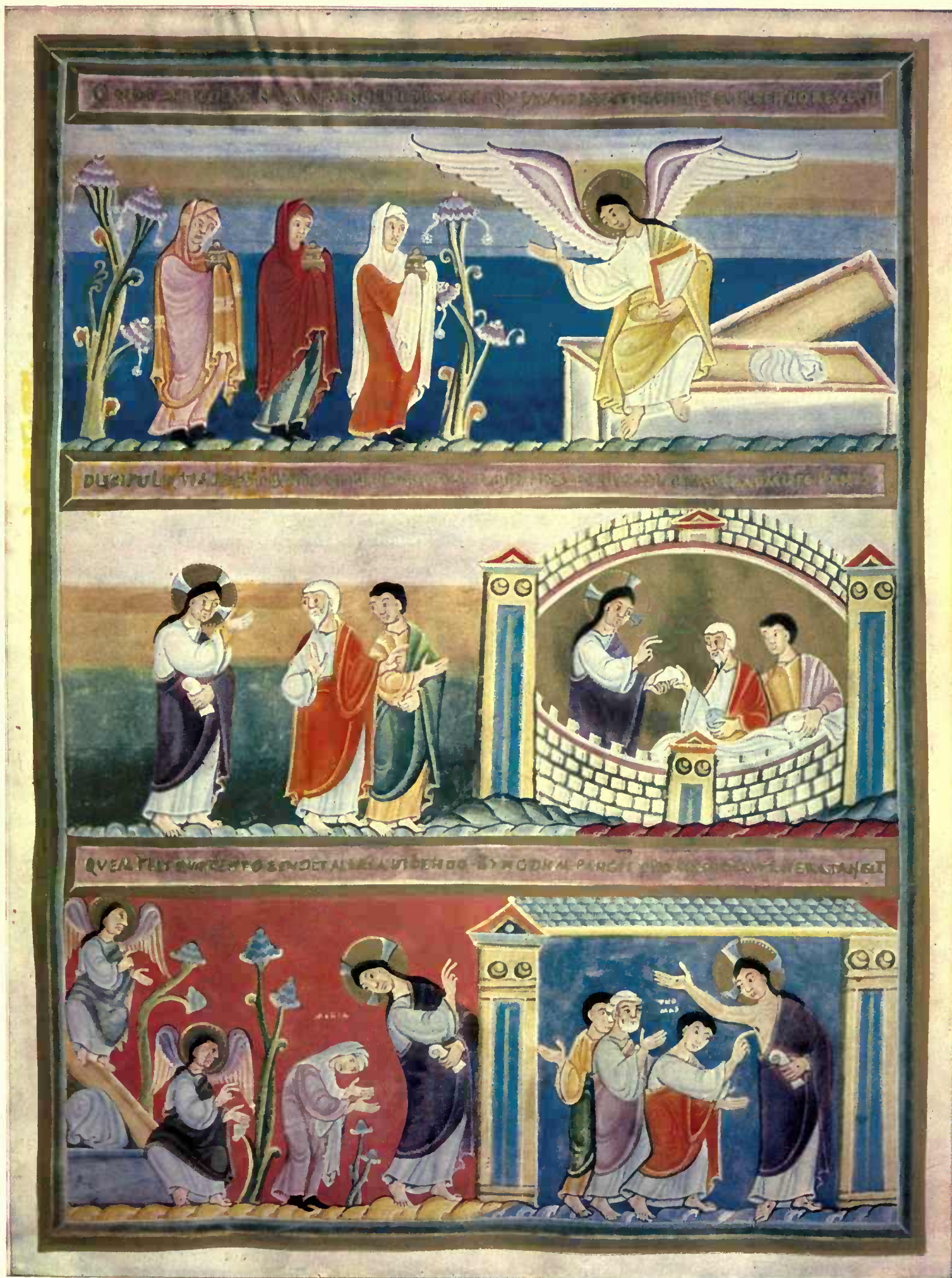
JAN VAN EYCK 1390-1441 *Flanders*
 The Wedding of Giovanni Arnolfini, 1434
 Oil on wood. National Gallery, London

▷ MASTER FRANCKE 1415-1440
Germany Christ in Agony. About 1435
 Oil on wood. Hamburg Art Gallery, Hamburg





MASACCIO 1440-1428 *Italy* The Tribute Money. About 1426 Mural in part Fresco. Detail. Brancacci Chapel in St. Maria del Carmine, Florence



GERMAN MONK About 1040. Christ after His Resurrection Codex Aureus, Echternach Monastery. Nuremberg Museum, Nuremberg



ANDREJ RUBLEV About 1400 Russia The Holy Trinity Tretjakoff Gallery, Moscow



CATALAN PAINTER About 1220 Majestas Domini
Fresco of the Apse of Saint Clement of Tahull. Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona



PISANELLO (Antonio di Puccio) About 1395-1450 *Italy*
 St. George and the Princess (Detail) About 1436 Fresco. Church of St. Anastasia, Verona

MASTER OF WITTINGAU About 1380 *Bohemia* Burial of Christ
 Oil on wood. State Collection, Prague

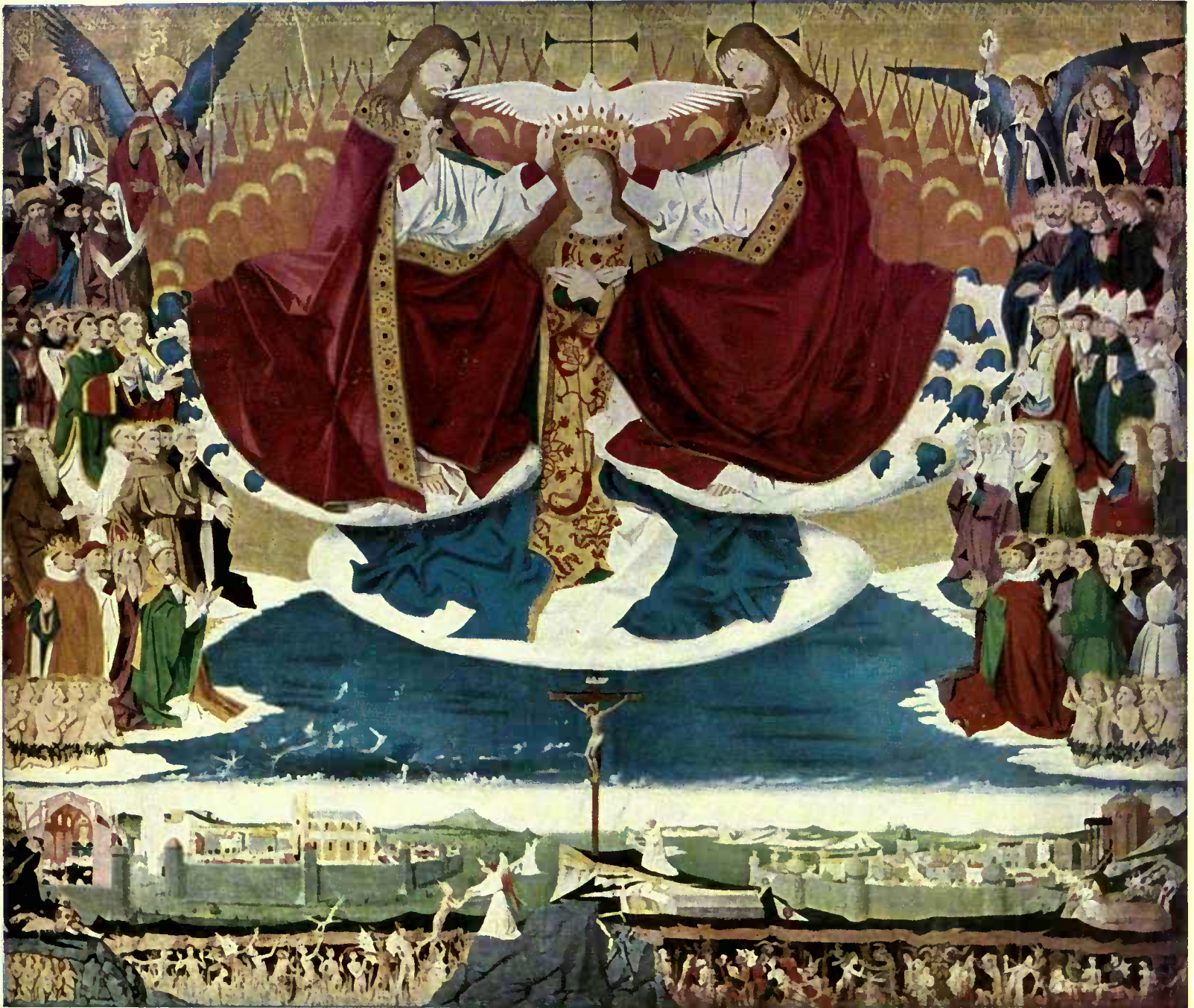




THIERRY BOUTS (School of) 1450-1475 *Flanders* The Passover Supper
Jewish Festival Commemorating the Exodus From Egypt Oil. Museum of Art, Basel



THIERRY BOUTS (School of) 1450-1475 *Flanders* Manna from Heaven
Oil. Museum of Art, Basel



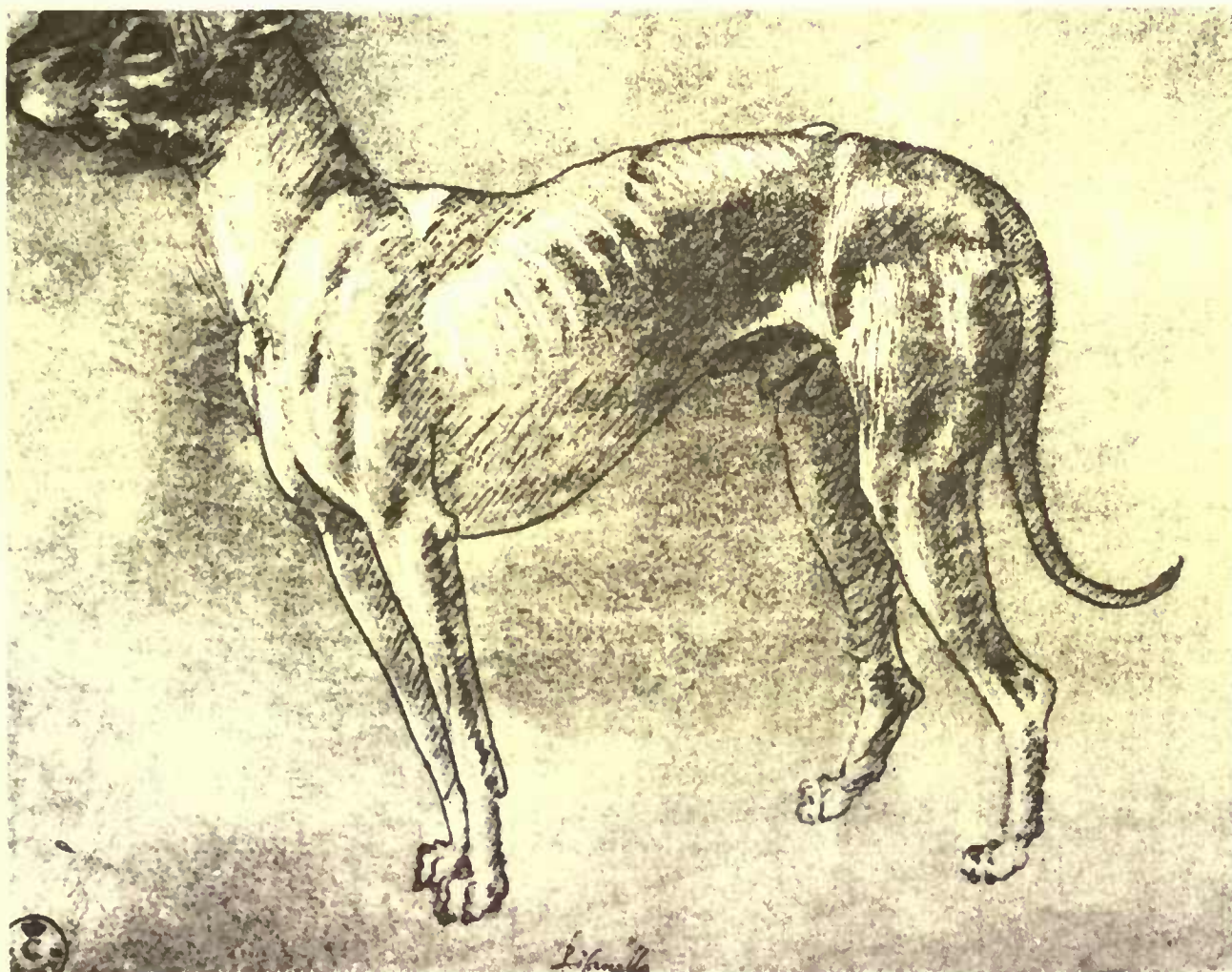
ENGUERRAND CHARONTON About 1410-1461 *France* Coronation of Mary
Oil on wood. Museum of the Hospital, Villeneuve les Avignon

By its irruption into everyday life, the Franciscan revolution introduced something new into Italy, a new morality encouraging painters to represent the contemporary feeling of the "need for tears". It was now that the fraternity of the Penitents, which was to become so important in the fifteenth century, was formed. The Hymns of Praise, the pilgrimages to the Holy Places, the associations of the Crusaders, who arrived back in Europe – all these added to the forces which had been freed by the Franciscan vision, and which crystallised the notion of the Passion.

Every detail of Jesus's life is painted by the Sienese Duccio in his famous "Maestà", in the cathedral of Siena. In the centre stands the Madonna; on the pinnacles and predellas we see the life of the Virgin according to the Golden Legend of Giacomo di Voragine, and the life of Jesus. Each incident is revealed in a small picture, as it might be in a miniature, the brilliant colouring enhanced by the gold. The delicacy of execution and perfection of the detail of these paintings are astonishing.

The "Noli me Tangere", showing Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection, is one of the best examples of the delicate handling combined with intense feeling which characterises the work of Duccio. Against a background

PISANELLO (Antonio di Puccio) About 1395-1450 *Italy* Study of a Dog. About 1410
Bistre Drawing. Uffizi Gallery, Florence





DANISH ANONYMOUS 1380 The Carol, from a Fresco of the Orslev Church. Drawing

of golden rocks, a slender and conventionalised Christ appears to a Mary who is prostrating herself. Thanks to Duccio's realism, she is shown draped in a huge red mantle, together with other familiar objects, and the ostentatious decoration which delighted the people of Siena. (p. 39)

Among the great contemporary masters was Giotto, who was then aged thirty, and whose early life has been so delightfully described in the Commentaries of Ghiberti. "The art of painting", Ghiberti says, "Came alive again in Etruria, in a hamlet near Florence called Vespignano. In that place, a child of marvellous genius who could draw a sheep from life was born. One day, the painter Cimabue, passing by on his way to Bologna, saw a child sitting on the ground drawing a sheep on a slate. He was filled with astonishment at the sight of this boy of such tender years who drew so well. He realised that the child was untaught and asked him his name. 'I am called Giotto', was the reply. 'My father's name is Bondone, and he lives in the house over there'. Cimabue, who was a prosperous man, went over with the child to the father, who was a poor man, and asked him for his boy. And the father gave him the son. Cimabue took Giotto away, and that is how Giotto became Cimabue's pupil". (pl. 38)

When he had mastered his craft, Giotto painted the great religious themes at Assisi and Padua, with that fullness of treatment which only the art of fresco allows. In the upper church of Assisi, and in the Scrovegni Arena chapel in Padua, he expresses all his feeling for nature. Among the thirty-seven scenes which cover the walls, "Joachim with the Shepherds" shows his figurative art at its finest. He respects the iconographic or symbolic nature of the subject, yet paints in a natural setting against a blue sky. The impressive human figures of the shepherds and Joachim stand out sharply against the rocky landscape in which a sheep-fold lies half-hidden. (pl. 40) The sobriety of the setting increases the moment of drama; and Giotto, who knew well how to obtain his effects, goes on to dumbfound the spectator passing from one scene to the other as he recounts pictorially the episodes in the life of the Virgin and Christ. On the triumphal arch in the "Mary from the Annunciation", Mary is depicted with a completely Florentine beauty. She is listening to the angel, her hands are folded on her breast, her face is grave yet human; this is far from the severe and remote expressions of Theotokos the Byzantine. (pl. 41)

The Assisi school ended in 1330 A.D., with the work of Pietro Lorenzetti. The severe expression on the face of Mary in his "Madonna", and the distant look of the child Jesus, class it as still in the transition period, while he shows his technical power in the folds and draperies. (pl. 42) Ambrogio Lorenzetti, on the other hand, is a complete realist; the face of his exquisite young girl in the "Mother and Child",

PIERO
DELLA FRANCESCA
About 1410-1492 Italy
The Virgin
of the Annunciation
Detail. About 1456
Fresco
Church of San Francesco
Arezzo

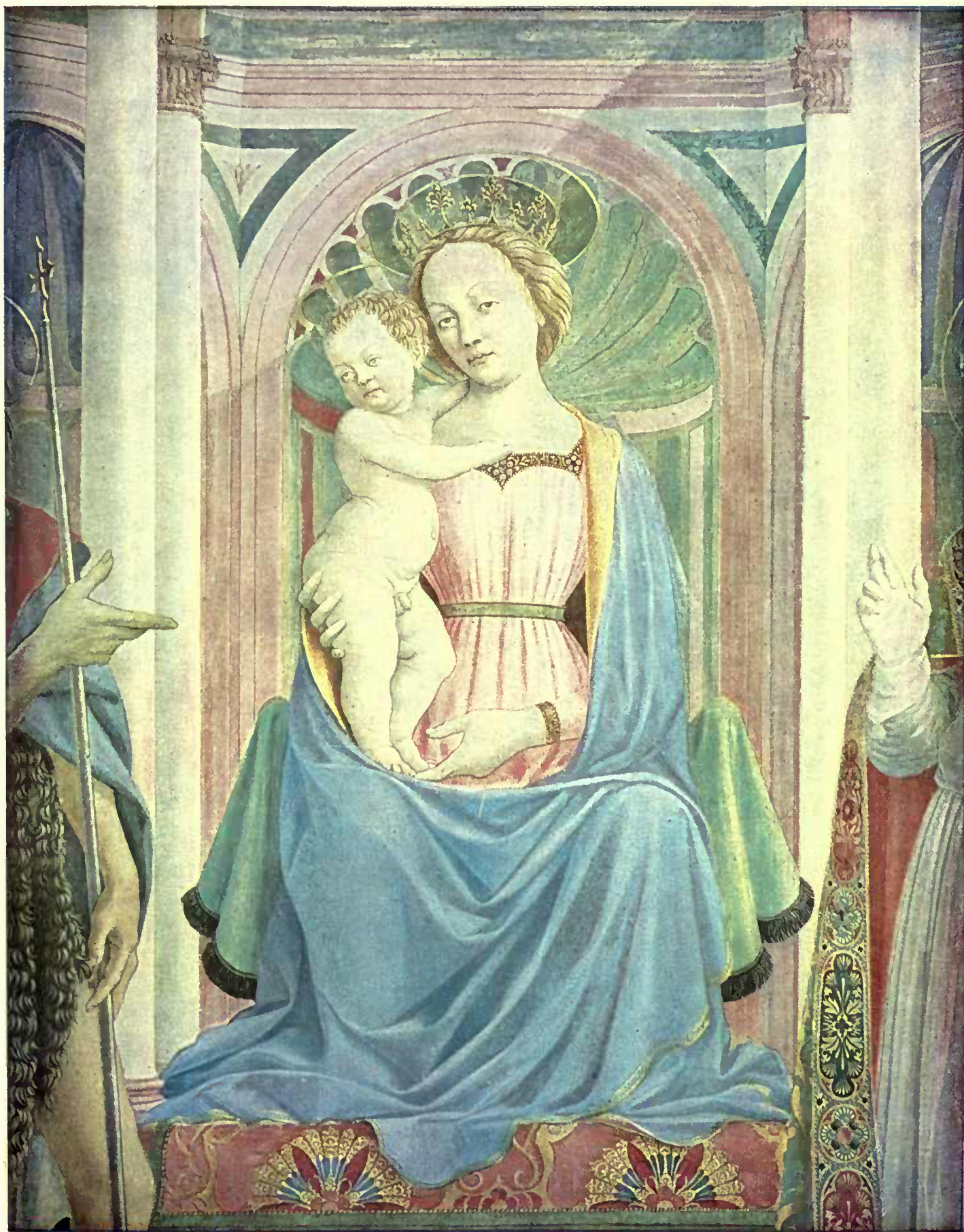


in which Mary is suckling her infant, is the portrait of a young Sienese. Unlike Pietro, he reveals a love of the concrete and acute powers with observation by introducing precise and amusing details with the zest of a story-teller. The same sweetness of expression is to be seen in the faces and gestures of the subjects of the "Annunciation" by an unknown master. (pl. 43)

It was not only to the Virgin and to Christ that the faithful now had recourse for intercession. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the cult of the Saints had increased, and people went quite naturally to the *Poverello* of Assisi and his followers. The "Saint Clara" in the lower chapel of Saint Francis at Assisi, by Simone Martini, reveals all the exquisite delicacy of the Sienese master, imprinted with an urbanity and a certain Gothic preciousity. (pl. 45)



GIORGIONE (Giorgio Barbarelli) 1477-1510 *Italy* Portrait of a Man. About 1500



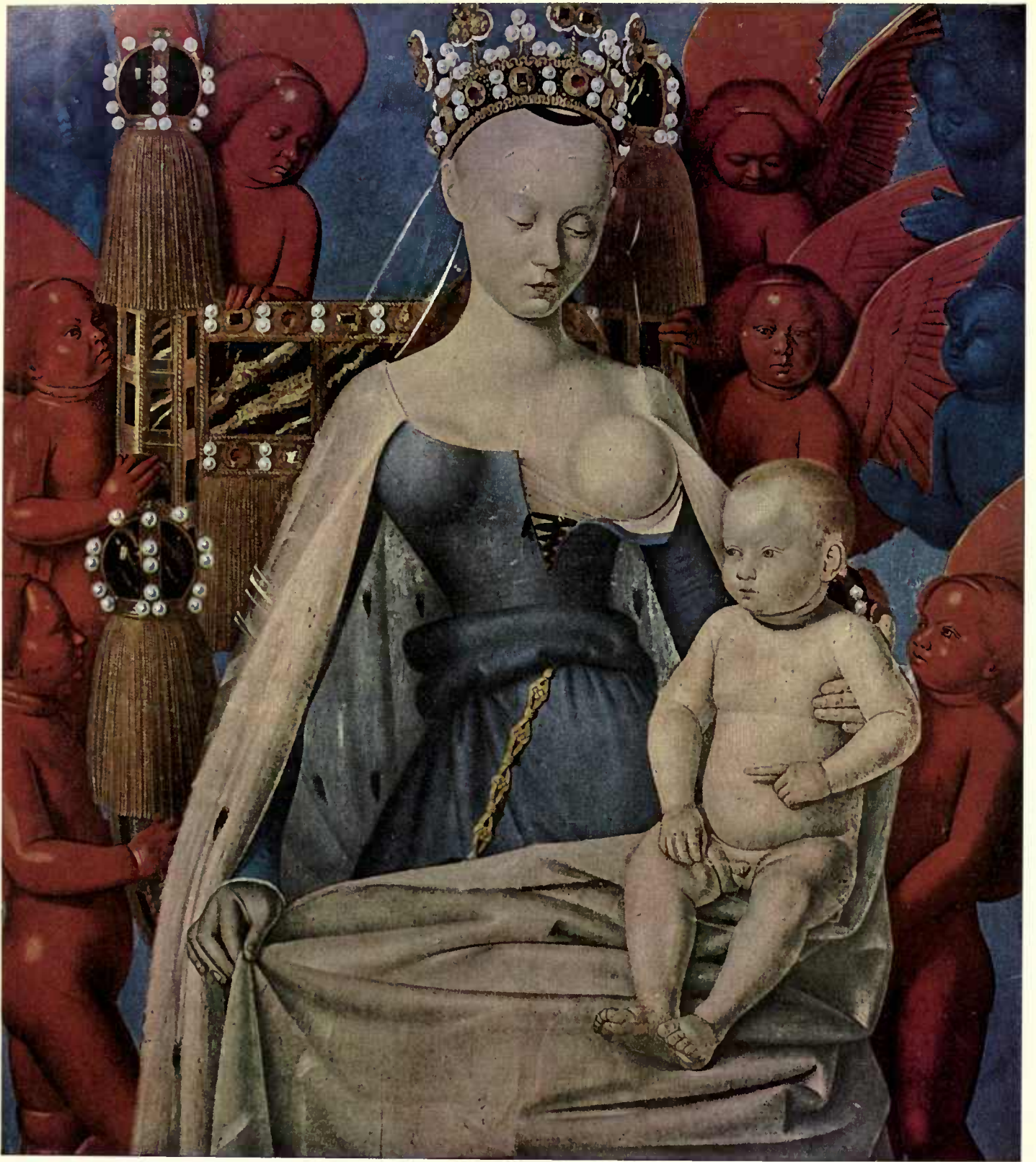
DOMENICO VENEZIANO About 1400-1461 *Italy* The Virgin with the Child (Detail) About 1445
Retable of Santa Lucia, Uffizi Gallery, Florence



PAOLO UCCELLO 1397-1475 *Italy* Battle of S. Romano (Detail) 1456-1460
Oil. Uffizi Gallery, Florence

SANDRO BOTTICELLI 1445-1510 *Italy* Moses and the Jethro Daughters (Detail)
Mural, in part Fresco. The Sistine Chapel, Vatican





JEAN FOUQUET 1415-1480 *France* The Virgin
Oil on wood. Royal Museum, Antwerp

SANDRO BOTTICELLI 1445-1510
Italy The Birth of Venus
 Detail. About 1486
 Oil. Uffizi Gallery, Florence



By the beginning of the Middle Ages, German painting had declined with the Empire; as chivalry collapsed, so did the Hohenstaufens. In that sombre moment for Germany known as the "inter-regnum" the country, deprived of its leaders, fell into a state of anarchy. It was not until Charles IV of Luxembourg ascended the throne that the arts revived. This imperial Maecenas, who was to distinguish himself in every sphere of life, now set about making Prague the intellectual centre for his empire.

*Germany
 and Bohemia
 Thirteenth
 Century*

We see this in the panels of the reredos by the Master of Wittingau. The religion and spiritual feeling of his "Deposition" are revealed in the expressions on the faces and the infinite love of the Virgin, Saint John and the Holy Women. Bathed in a lunar light, these figures are insubstantial, draped with weightless garments which complete the impression of mystery. (pl. 53)

In the panels of the "Reredos in the Cistercian Abbey of Hohenfurth", the Master of Hohenfurth is more of a realist. His "Resurrection of Christ" reveals a predilection for bright colours and lively movement. This close observation of the setting increased in the second half of the century, as artists became interested in all the manifestations of life. They were no longer satisfied with one or two diagrammatic



SANDRO BOTTICELLI 1445-1510 *Italy* Study of a Man and Head of a Man. About 1480
Silver-point. Drawing on a dark red paper. Louvre, Paris

indications for the setting of a scene; the landscape is more important for them and the subject matter taken from real life less stylised. The composition is richer too, more varied, full of picturesque details, clothes and accessories, and the faces have lost their impersonal character. (pl. 24)

This tendency was most marked in the Hamburg area, where the master-painter Bertram was at work. His twenty-four panels of the "Triptych of Grabow" illustrate scenes from the Old Testament and the childhood of Christ in a narrative and anecdotic manner, and his human-beings are peasants dressed in contemporary costume. This is the art of the petit-bourgeois. (pl. 36)

It is to be found again in the manuscripts. In Austria, a lack of subtlety in execution makes the illustrations of this period seem somewhat naive and uninspired, although they possess a piquant flavour of rusticity – as in "The Baptism of Jesus", (beginning of fourteenth century. Pl. 20) The period closes with paintings of a frankly profane nature, such as the "Singer of Religious Songs". The familiar manner also reached more northern countries, as in Denmark, in the church of Orslev, where we can see a fresco of an animated farandole dance in which the dancers have thrown off all restraints. (pls. 26, 58)



DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO 1449-1494 *Italy* Head of a Young Man
Black crayon on light red paper. Louvre, Paris



GEERTGEN TOT SINT JANS
1480-1490 *Netherlands*
St. John the Baptist
Oil on wood.
State Museum, Berlin

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, France had been ruined by the Hundred Years' war, and her prestige had declined. Under the generous patronage of the Dukes of Burgundy – Philip the Bold, John without Fear, Philip the Good and Charles the Brave – the master-painters of the Low Countries had flourished. South of the Alps, the Great Schism had ended (1378-1474), and with the return of the Popes from Avignon, Rome had regained her authority. After the inauguration



HUGO VAN DER GOES 1420-1482 *Flanders* Adoration of the Shepherds (Detail retable Portinari)
About 1476-78 Oil. Uffizi Gallery, Florence



HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER 1497-1543 Germany Lais Corinthiaca: portrait of Madeleine Offenburg
Oil. Museum of Arts, Basel



ALBERT DURER 1471-1528 Germany The Four Apostles (Detail). About 1526
Oil on wood. Pinakothek, Munich



ANYE BRU About 1502-6 *Spain* The Martyrdom of St. Cucufat. Retable of St. Cugat (Detail)
Oil on wood. Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona



VITTORE CARPACCIO About 1450-1525 *Italy* Two Apostles. Brush and Bistre. Uffizi Gallery, Florence

of the Jubilee in 1450 by Nicolas V, a further impetus was given to the faith by Sixtus IV. In the other Italian city-states, Florence, Milan, Naples, the wealth and power of the local Maecenas's – the Medicis, Ludovico the Moor, the princes of Aragon – encouraged a brilliant flowering of the arts and letters, and these cities played an important part in the political conflicts of the last years of the fifteenth century. The armies of Charles V and the other great powers clashed in the peninsula, and Charles VIIIth of France's invasion of Italy in 1494 encouraged many intellectual and artistic exchanges between the two countries. In this way, thanks not only to politics but also to the changing intellectual and social climate, the Renaissance gradually spread throughout Europe.

While the art of the Middle Ages had been almost exclusively religious, the "humanist" movement reflected the new intellectual interests of the Italians – in the antique thought of a Plato or an Aristotle, in the discovery of a new world (and "The New World"), and in scientific research and knowledge of every kind. This new approach to things of the mind, based on the "ardent study of reality", was responsible for many works of art in which the beauties of nature were faithfully reproduced.





ALBRECHT DURER 1471-1528 *Germany* Landscape
About 1500. Watercolour. Louvre, Paris

◁

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER 1472-1553 *Germany* Portrait of a Man in Fur Hat
Watercolour. British Museum, London



ANDREA MANTEGNA 1431-1506 *Italy* Judith (Judith and Holofernes) Drawing. Uffizi Gallery, Florence



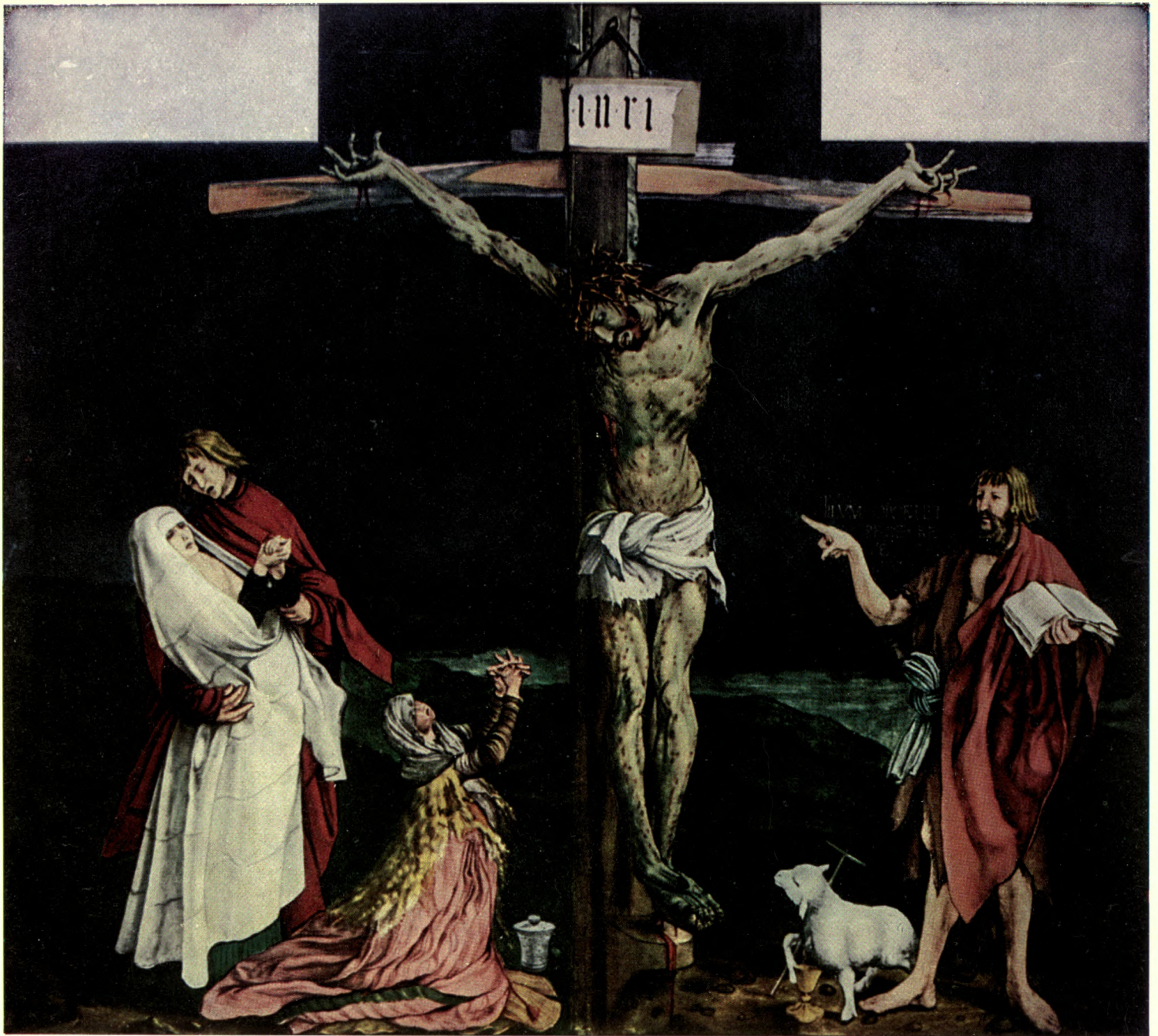
ANDREA MANTEGNA 1431-1506 *Italy* The Mourning for Christ. About 1500
Oil. Brera Museum, Milan



JEROME BOSCH About 1462-1516 *Netherlands* The Garden of Lust (Paradise) Detail
About 1500 Oil. Prado Museum, Madrid



JEROME BOSCH About 1462-1516 Netherlands The Garden of Lust (Detail) About 1500
Oil. Prado Museum, Madrid



GRUNEWALD (Mathias Neithardt) About 1450-1528 *Germany*
Crucifixion. The Isenheim Altar. About 1516
Oil. Colmar Museum

In spite of this triumph of the individual spirit, and the artists's preoccupation with the pagan world (which was to become more marked in the second period of the Renaissance), religious paintings were the main requirement of the corporations and guilds. For society was still subject in the fourteenth century to the hierarchical organisations of the Middle Ages, the religious confraternities and corporations, which embraced the nobility and the merchants as well as the artisans and peasants. The salvation of the soul and the perils of life beyond the grave still obsessed everyone, from prince to peasant. In the fifteenth century too men still lived in an atmosphere where violence, terror, plague and famine were common occurrences, where witchcraft, The Last Judgement and Hell-Fire seemed very real things. Thanks to the invention of printing, *Ars Moriendi*, an illustrated treatise on the art of living and dying well, was widely read, and the *dances macabres* became popular. The theatre, the "mystery" plays and other public entertainments gave expression to this fifteenth century love of "mysticism".

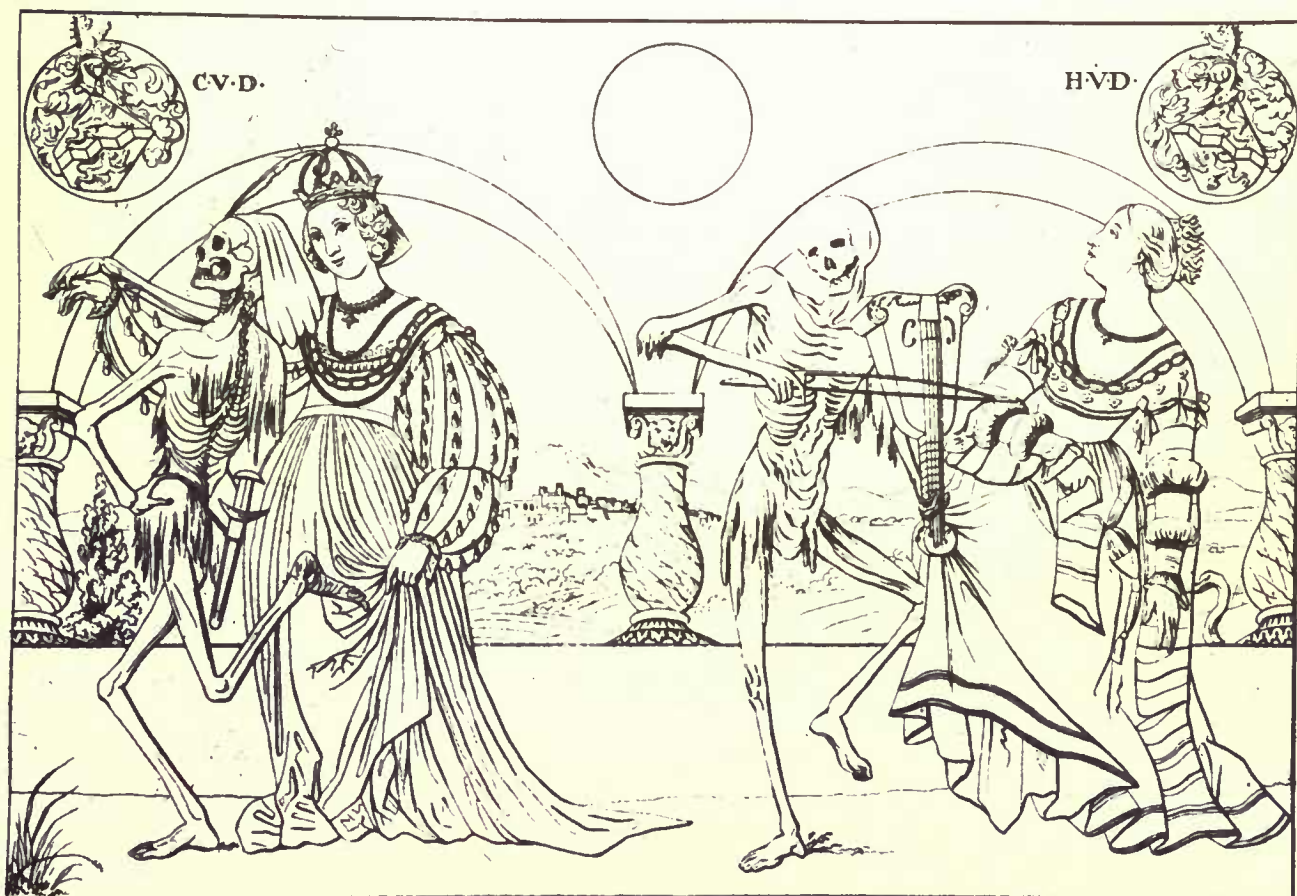
The intellectual approach to life on the one hand, and the realist approach to art on the other, were nicely balanced in the Italian mind. If in other parts of Europe they appeared in different guises, they were still the two distinctive features of the age.

We may say that the Italian Renaissance, which was in full swing by the fifteenth century, lasts until the Baroque period some two centuries later. Among the

The First Renaissance in Italy

NICOLAS MANUEL DEUTSCH 1484-1530 Germany "Danse Macabre"

Lithographed by Guillaume Stettler, Bern, about 1845





JACOPO BELLINI About 1400-1470 Italy Knight Fighting a Dragon. About 1460
Bistre. Louvre, Paris

many reasons for its artistic output, not the least was the material prosperity of the Italian cities – the wealth of the banks of Florence, Lucca and Milan, and the maritime trade of Venice and Genoa, as far afield as Crete and Cyprus. But perhaps the most important factor was the power of the Papal States, around which were grouped many important courts: that of the Medici in Florence (in particular, Lorenzo the Magnificent); the brilliant court of Ludovico the Moor in Milan; of the Estes in Ferrara, where Isabel was the leading spirit; and finally in Naples, the court of the Aragonese princes. Sometimes a *condottiere* like Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini, or the Colleoni of Bergamo, would make themselves rulers of the state. The Dukes of Montefeltro did this in Urbino, where they set up one of the most cultivated courts of Italy. In these opulent surroundings, the artist, humanists and savants were offered hospitality, and given full scope for the development and expression of their talents and personalities. The Academy of San Marco was founded in Florence during the rule of the elder Cosimo, and his descendant, Lorenzo de' Medici, founded the "Studio", another kind of academy for bringing well-known contemporary philosophers, such as Poliziano and Ficino, together.

The painters meanwhile speculated on the ideal proportions of the human form, or addressed themselves enthusiastically to the study of Vitruvius's laws of perspective, which were summed up in the architect L. B. Alberti's *de aedificatoria*. Certain picturesque elements were perhaps lost as a result of this, but they were still to be found

in one or two Italian artists belonging to the old tradition, and in other parts of Europe.

The avant-garde painter Masaccio reacted violently against the elaboration of the Gothic style and “organised his painting according to volume, space and light”. He died prematurely in Rome, but his work exercised a powerful influence on contemporary painters. The Carmine chapel reveals his skill in spacing human-figures over a wide canvas, “authentic types”, in some of whom we recognise portraits of fellow Florentines. (pl. 48)

Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, generally known as Fra Angelico, belongs to the old tradition. His aim, like that of his contemporaries, was to illustrate biblical history, the life of Christ and the Virgin, and the legend of the Saints. In the convent of San Marco in Florence, he depicts the life of Jesus as if he were illustrating a book, with elaborately illuminated pages. The “Annunciation of Cortona” reveals his piety and optimism, justifying Vasari’s expression, “this must have been painted by the hand either of a Saint or of an angel”. (pl. 29)

In the productive and stimulating atmosphere of Florence, Fra Angelico, Ma-

ANONYMOUS About 1465 France The King of Arms
Bistre. Bibl. Nationale, Paris





M. WOLGEMUT 1493 Germany Legend of the Crossing with the "Last Sacrament" on a wood bridge, in Utrecht 1277. Wooden Facsimile, Liber Chronicarum Mundi, Nuremberg

saccio and Masolino were followed by Paolo Uccello who invented perspective drawing. "This new science plunged him into such a state of admiration", writes Vasari, "that his fixation on perspective and its attendant artificialities caused him finally to paint with a complete lack of feeling". This is to be seen in his three episodes from the "Battle of San Romano", grotesque paintings of a battle which seem quite unreal. (pl. 62)

At the same time there were many exponents of the "international Gothic" style of painting, led at the beginning of the fifteenth century by Pisanello, whose principal work "Saint George Rescuing the Princess of Trebizond" is full of the romantic and affected manner so typical of the courtly tales. Here, the elegant features of the Princess, drawn in profile, belong to an aristocrat of a fifteenth century court; she is dressed in the style of her time and placed against a background of fanciful architecture. (pls. 52, 57)

Domenico Veneziano, a master in the art of painting in oils, reveals in his "Adoration of the Magi" in Berlin something of this "courtly elegance". He develops it in the reredos of the "St. Mary's Altar from Santa Lucia" (pl. 61) by organising the grouping of his figures, and painting them in brighter colours. He



ANTONELLO DA MESSINA About 1430-1479 *Italy* Portrait of a Child. About 1460
Charcoal on green paper. Albertina, Vienna

gave a new tone to Florentine painting, in which he was supported by Andrea del Castagno, Filippo Lippi and Filippino Lippi. The man who left his mark most firmly on the first half of the fifteenth century was Piero della Francesca, a pupil of



JACOPO BELLINI About 1400-1470 *Italy* Warriors and Knights. About 1450
Bistre. Louvre, Paris

Domenico Veneziano in Florence. He later worked at the court of the Duke of Montefeltro in Urbino, and at Arezzo, where he painted the remarkable cycle of the "History of the Cross" in the church of Saint Francis. Inspired by the holy writings and the Golden Legend, he deals in the first scenes with the death of Adam and then, as if to link up the Old and New Testaments, he paints an "Annunciation", in which Mary is depicted as a typical sturdy peasant of the Appenines. (pl. 59) He excelled too in scenes of quite a different kind, such as the meeting of Heraclitus with the Persians, or of Salomon with the Queen of Sheba.

Among the painters of northern Italy, Andrea Mantegna had been recognised in Venice, Padua and Verona. He worked as a painter and engraver at Padua in the Eremitani chapel, and painted the great reredos of San Zeno in Verona, in homage to the patron and bishop of the city. Like Piero della Francesca at Urbino, he entered

the service of the court of Mantua and decorated "The Room of the Spouses" with frescoes, and the "Little Study of Isabella d'Este". His powerful sense of design, the frigid and monochrome colouring, are best seen in his impressive and realistic "Mourning for Christ". (pls. 76, 77)

His influence was soon felt in the Venetian studios, particularly in that of Bellini. Apart from his Madonnas, Jacopo Bellini is famous for the meticulous sketches in his note-books, and for his perspective studies, so many varied and lively accounts of contemporary life. In "A Knight Fighting a Dragon" he shows us in detail how carefully the fifteenth century gold and silversmiths worked the surface embroidery of the sumptuous suits of armour and shields. Here, the horseman's helmet is profusely decorated with dragons and other imaginary beasts. (pls. 82, 86)

Gentile Bellini, the son of Jacopo and the official painter of the Serene Republic of Venice, went to Constantinople and the court of Mahomet II, where he painted the Sultan's portrait. He was equally at home in historical and crowd scenes, which he shows us in every part of Venice, filling them with all the seething life of the Grand Canal and the Piazza San Marco, together with processions of monks, penitents and religious confraternities – as in his "Procession in Venice". "The Preaching of Saint Mark" and the "Procession in the Piazza San Marco" (pl. 87) are essentially a series of sketches enabling him to display these talents to the full.

GENTILE BELLINI About 1429-1507 *Italy* Procession in Venice. About 1500
Bistre. Uffizi Gallery, Florence



Giovanni Bellini, the son of Jacopo and the brother of Gentile, painted the big backgrounds for the altars which were ordered by the various confraternities and which decorated the churches of Venice – as in the “Retable of Saint Zaccaria and Saint Job”. He specialised in elegant “Madonna and Child” portraits, and evocative religious scenes such as the “Transfiguration of Christ”, which is full of his own special “tonal atmosphere”. The human figures are precisely drawn, the expressions on the faces full of feeling. (pl. 92)

Carpaccio, the pupil of Gentile Bellini, revealed his master’s touch and liveliness in the celebrated cycle of the legend of “Saint Ursula”, and in “Saint George of the Schiavoni”. In the second, the knight is shown attacking a dragon on the front of the church of Saint Mark and an assembled audience of prelates and horsemen.

With the four greatest figures of the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Michelangelo and Raphael, the art of painting enters a new phase.

Leonardo da Vinci’s tremendous power of portraiture dominated the entire sixteenth century. We are aware of something of his genius from the piercing glance and omniscient expression in his self-portrait. Even his first picture, the “Baptism of Christ”, painted in the work-shop of the sculptor and goldsmith Verrocchio in Florence, has something supernatural about it. He left Florence in 1481 for the service of Ludovico the Moor. In his study for the “Virgin of the Rocks”, the Virgin seems to be in some imaginary, dream-like world of shadows and half-shadows, penetrated with those glamorous greens which are peculiar to Leonardo’s work.

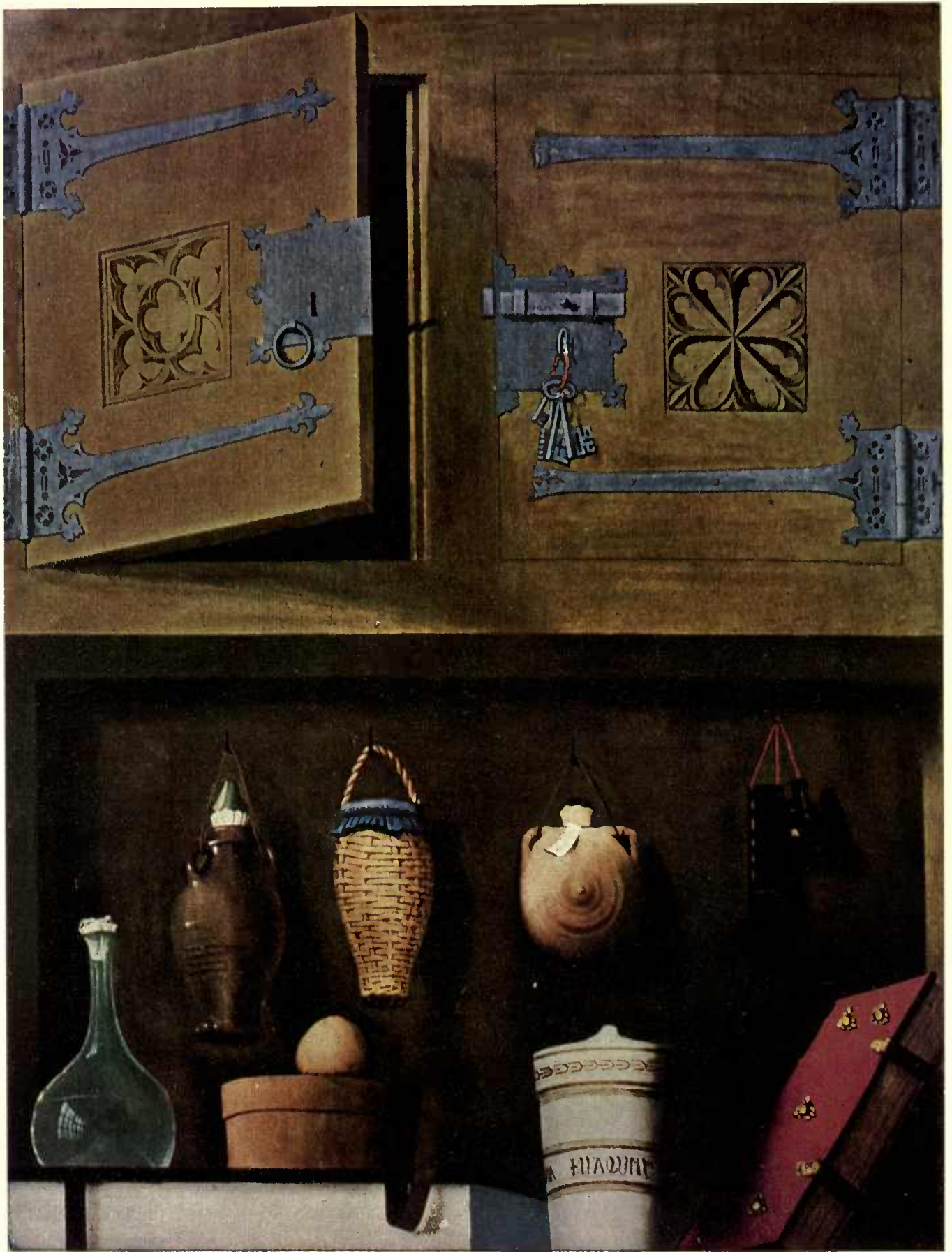
By 1499 he was famous throughout Italy, and he returned to Florence in 1500, to paint the “Saint Anne” in which, against another rocky background, he erected a pyramid of human forms. In his portraits – “The Beautiful Ferronière”, and the “Mona Lisa” of the enigmatic smile – he catches unerringly all the mystery of the women of the Florentine aristocracy. After a period in Rome between 1513 and 1515, he went to Amboise where he worked for Francis I until his death. He was a scientist and savant as well as a painter, as the astonishing variety of the sketches and notes in his manuscripts reveal, and many of the anatomical and scientific discoveries of the time can be traced to his researches. (Pls. 104, 105, 108)

When Leonardo left for Milan, Botticelli became the foremost Florentine painter. Graceful, sensuous, ever curious, his work reveals this personality which, towards the end of his life, the influence of Savonarola turned to mysticism. In the “Primavera” and the “Birth of Venus”, Botticelli is a painter of mythological, allegorical and poetic scenes. His most typical work is perhaps the “Youth of Moses”, a fresco in the Sistine chapel which combines freshness of tone with rhythmical grace in the blond-haired female figures and the studied elegance of their dresses. (pls. 63, 65, 66)

The personalities of the two other great masters, Raphael and Michelangelo, were violently opposed. Raphael, who was born in Urbino, is an early sixteenth century example of that sense of balance or pure beauty belonging to the classical Renaissance which the “Rinascimento” claimed as its own. Called to Rome first in 1508 by Julius II, then later by Leo X, he became the favourite artist of the Popes, of whom he painted a number of fine portraits. The sketches and preparatory designs for these, as in the “Portrait of Julius II”, are very revealing. During his Roman period he painted many of the huge frescoes in the Vatican apartments, and prepared the cartoons and preliminary sketches for the Sistine chapel. (pls. 118, 126)



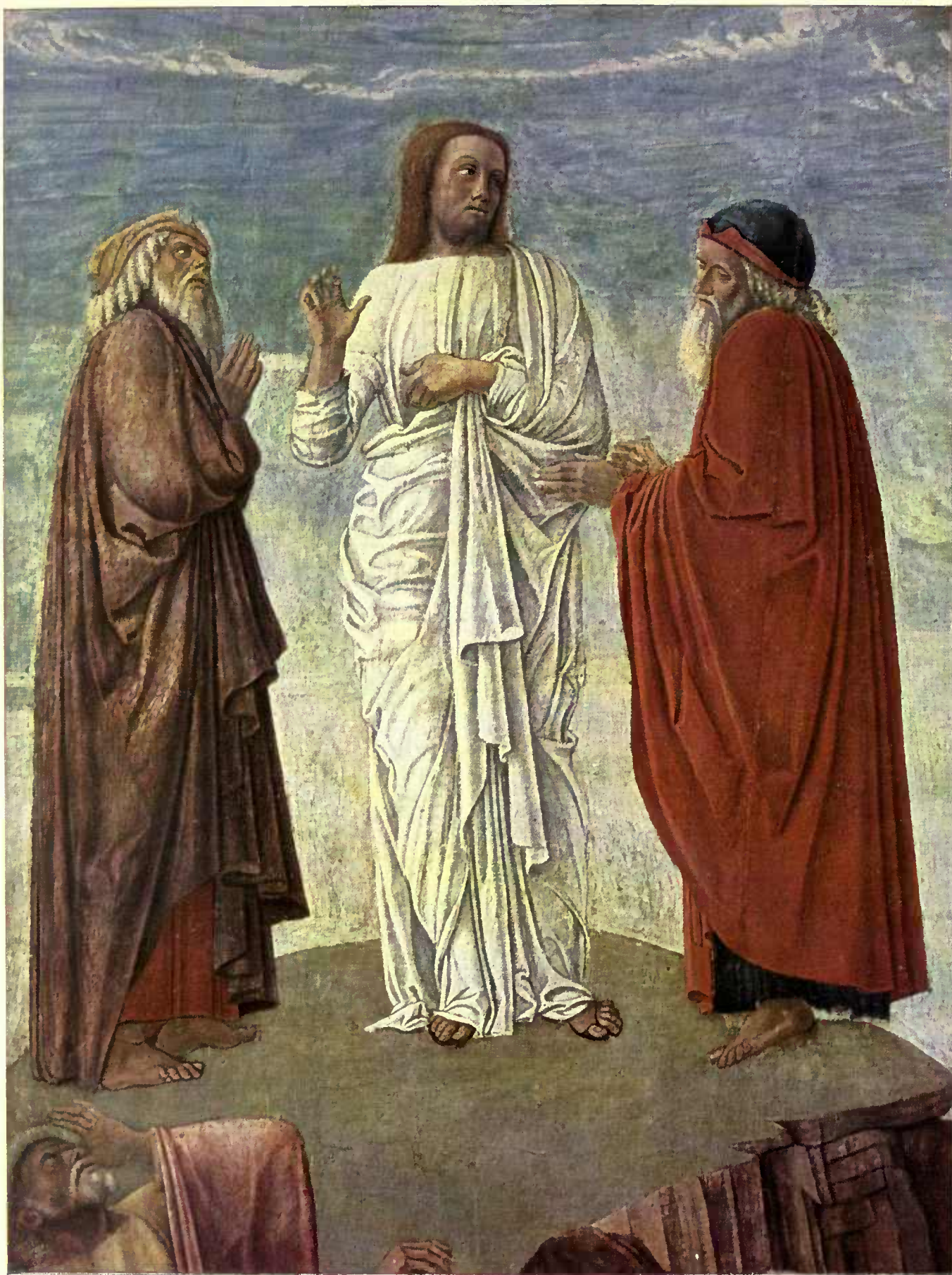
LUCAS DE LEYDE
1494-1535
Netherlands
Mary
with the Child
About 1517
Oil on wood
State Museum
Berlin



GERMAN MASTER About 1470 Still Life with Cupboard for Bottles and Books
Tempera on wood. Mortimer Brandt Collection, New York



ALBERT ALTDORFER 1480-1538 *Germany* Landscape on the Danube with Woerth Castle and Mount Schenken. Oil. Pinakothek, Munich



GIOVANNI BELLINI About 1430-1516 *Italy* The Transfiguration of Christ. Detail
Oil. Correr Museum, Venice



MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI 1475-1564 *Italy* Study for Sybil of Lybia (Sistine Chapel)
Sanguine. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



PERUGINO (Pietro Vannucci) 1450-1523 *Italy* A Man in Armour
Black chalk on blue paper. Royal Collection, Windsor Castle



TINTORETTO (Jacopo Robusti) 1518-1594 *Italy*. Studies for a Statuette
Black crayon on blue paper. Museum of Art, Budapest

Beside Raphael, Michelangelo seems a Titan. Sculptor, architect and painter, he was taught his craft by Ghirlandaio in Florence where, under the patronage of Lorenzo, he was greatly influenced by the Medici court. Called to Rome in 1506 by Julius II, primarily to design the papal tomb, he was later entrusted with the decoration of the great vault in the Sistine chapel; it embodies his entire output of fresco work. Even when painting, he remained essentially the sculptor, and the figures in these frescoes have something plastic about them in their fore-shortening; they have been influenced too by his studies for the nude in the famous "*ignudi*". These early sketches foretell the genius of Michelangelo.



FRENCH ANONYMOUS About 1559. Madame of Savoy. Crayon and Sanguine. Condé Museum, Chantilly

On the immense curved vault of the Sistine chapel (120ft. by 40 ft.) he depicted the whole of Genesis, from the birth of Adam and Eve. He thought little of the iconographic way of depicting the divinities and, as if always conscious of his powerful sculptor's hands, delineates his "Christ of the Judgement" as a beardless youthful God; and his "Tree of Good and Evil" as an integral part of the landscape. He here illustrated the bible with the lessons of the Hebrew prophets. Although the colouring is subtle, the general effect is grandiose, as of some vast celestial vision in which we are allowed to share. Michelangelo alone among painters possesses this sculptural quality; with it, he dominated the entire sixteenth century (pls. 93, 106).

Italian fifteenth century art had its northern counterpart in Flemish painting. Flanders then included northern France, Belgium and southern Holland (Belgium and Holland were not separated until the sixteenth century), and it was extremely prosperous. Society consisted primarily of the bankers and big merchants, both native and foreign; and in Bruges, which was closely linked with Spain, Flanders possessed a port into which poured the produce of distant countries, everything from spices and exotic fruits to oriental carpets. It was here, amid this bourgeois society and native aristocracy, that Philip the Good, the Duke of Burgundy, set up his glittering court after the ravages of the Hundred Years War. Under the guidance of this Maecenas, the merchants, bankers and confraternities commissioned the artists to paint their portraits, or the reredoses and polyptychs for their chapels and assembly rooms.

A strong feeling of moral fervour generally characterises such commercial societies, and when in 1444 A.D., the "Imitation of Christ" appeared in Flanders, it bore as sub-title "useful advice for the spiritual life". In spite of occasional traces of the old iconographic manner, the Flemish artists depicted this comfortable bourgeois society realistically.

Jean Van Eyck, a painter at the court of the Dukes of Burgundy who was also employed on various diplomatic missions, ushers in the era of Flemish art. He painted the remarkable polyptych of the mystic lamb, "The Divine Comedy of Flanders", in which the twenty-four panels around the central figures of Jesus and Mary are allegorical, depicting saints, angels and donors. In the detailed reredos, his faithful reproduction of everything he sees gives one the feeling, simply from the expressions on the faces in the group of angels, of almost hearing the sound of the individual voices. His human beings are minutely described, rather than interpreted. The smallest wrinkle or wart on cheek or nose is shown not as a temporary disfigurement but as a very real part of its owner's personality. We are aware of this in the portraits of "Giovanni Arnolfini and His Wife", perhaps the best example of his art; their enigmatic smiles say much about the gravity and seriousness of life in Flanders. Clad in broad-cloth and velvet, surrounded by the solid furniture of a Flemish bed-room, they epitomise the "well-to-do bourgeois". (pl. 46)

Roger Van der Weyden, or Roger of the Pasture, was regarded as one of the master-painters of Brussels, where he lived after 1436 A.D. He concentrated on religious subjects, giving the faces of his sitters great serenity, but never forgetting that they were human beings. He was much influenced by the theatre and its "mystery plays". The theatre was popular in the fifteenth century, and many processions and "mystery plays" dealing with the life of Jesus and the Saints took place on the squares before the churches. In his "Annunciation" and in "Christ Appearing to His Mother"

*The
Fifteenth
Century
in Flanders*

Henry IV.



FRANÇOIS QUESNEL 1545-1619 France Portrait of Henry IV. About 1600
Drawing. Bibl. Nationale, Paris



DANIEL DUMONSTIER 1574-1646 France Portrait of Françoise Hésèque. About 1600
Drawing. Bibl. Nationale, Paris



BERNARDINO LUINI About 1475-1532
Italy
 The Grimace
 Drawing. British Museum, London

Roger Van der Weyden shows these against a background of Gothic architecture.

After Van Eyck the Master of Bruges, and Van der Weyden the Master of Brussels, comes Petrus Christus who shares many of their qualities, while adding a special one of his own, in the grouping and disposition of the figures. He was particularly successful in *genre* scenes – as in the goldsmith's shop where, while paying tribute to Saint Eloi the patron saint of the fraternity, he tells us exactly what it feels like to be a goldsmith. He also painted a number of good female portraits, among them the "Unknown Woman" with her elaborate coiffure and long, slender neck, whose bonnet ribbons are ingeniously used to enhance the delicate features and pouting expression. (pl. 31)

Thierry Bouts learned his craft in the work-shop of Roger Van der Weyden, but his painting is more primitive and harsher. He is known chiefly as the painter of the town of Louvain, and for his masterpiece, the "Last Supper", in which the emaciated features of the disciples are those of aging, broken men. The same manner is to be found in two panels by an anonymous artist, "The Passover Supper" and "The Manna from Heaven", also notable for the elaborate costumes and close attention to detail in the portrayal of the landscape. They both have something of the stylised traditional quality, but remain essentially accurate portraits of bourgeois life. (pls. 54, 55)

Hugo van der Goes was the finest Flemish painter in the second half of the



BEGA CORNELIS 1470-1533 *Netherlands*
Study of a Farmer
Sanguine. Louvre, Paris



JACQUES CALLOT 1592-1635 *France*
Study of a Statuette. About 1610
Sanguine. Uffizi Gallery, Florence

fifteenth century. He was admitted to the painter's guild, and painted the "Marriage-Procession of Charles the Brave and Margaret of York" in Bruges.

He was then summoned to the court of Frederick of Montefeltro, the Duke of Urbino, and made a career for himself in Ital yunder the name of Just de Gand. An inventive painter, he used incidents from every-day life to bring religion closer to the people – as in his "Adoration of the Shepherds" in which the richly accoutred nobles on horseback, and the ragged peasants at their cottage doors, all set in a wintry landscape, are painted with astonishing realism. This preoccupation with contemporary life gives great vivacity to his master-piece, the "Portinari Triptych", commissioned by Tomaso Portinari, the Medici's agent in Florence. (pl. 69)

Gerard de Saint Jean (Geertgen tot Sit Jans), the versatile painter of Haarlem, who worked at Delft, painted subtle *nocturnes* of the Nativity, as well as lush, abundant landscapes – for example, his "Saint John at Patmos". The melancholy atmosphere evoked by the eerie lighting is offset by a curious and often touching sense of humour. (pl. 68)

Jerome Bosch, the acknowledged master of the grotesque, is said to have learnt

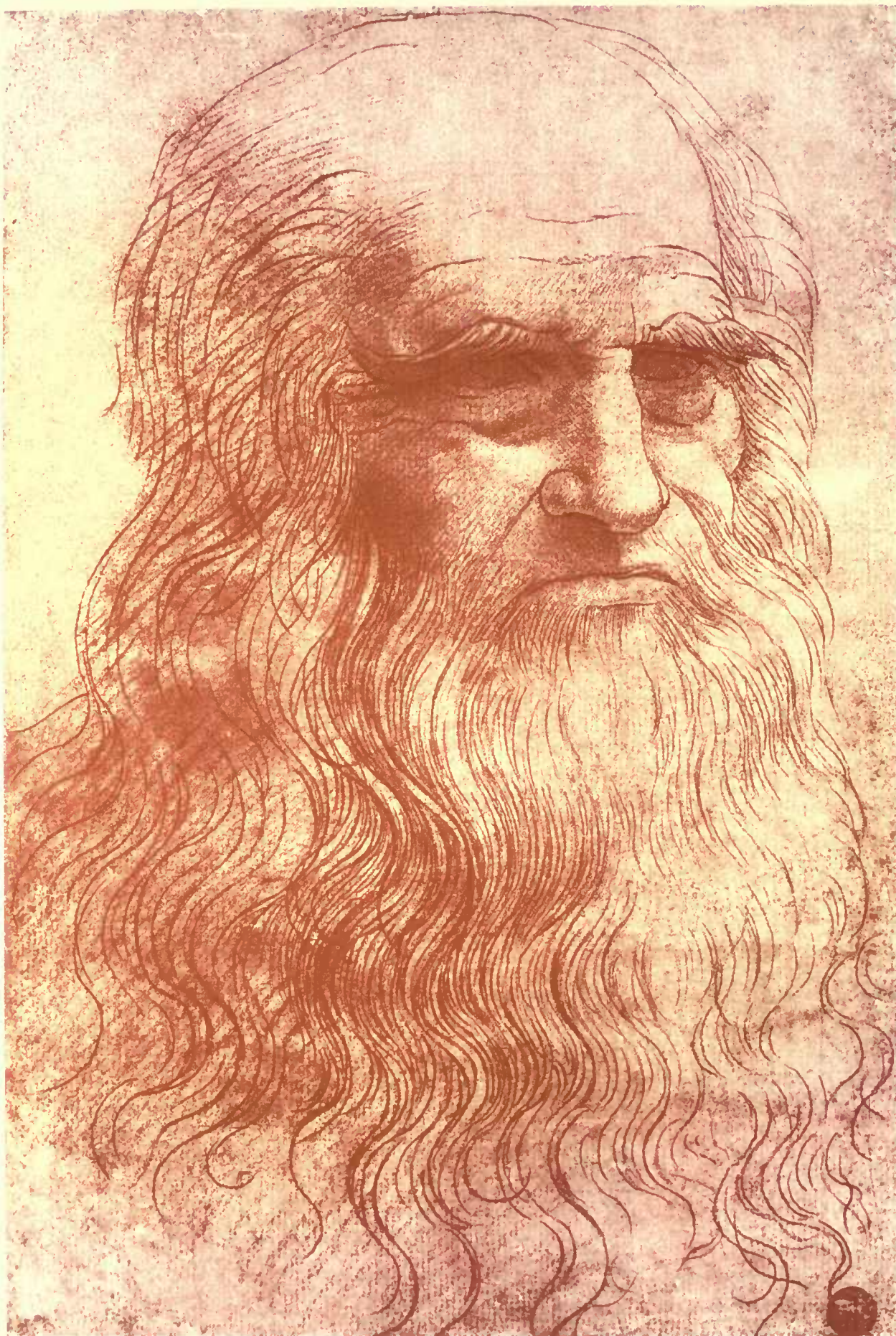


GIORGIONE (Giorgio BARBARELLI) 1477-1510 *Italy* The Adoration of the Shepherds
Charcoal on blue paper. Royal Collection, Windsor Castle

the secret of "enjoying gloom". He painted all the terrors known to the men of the Middle Ages, as well as some of their enthusiasms. The mystery, imagination and subtle colouring of his work are seen at their best in his famous triptych "The Garden



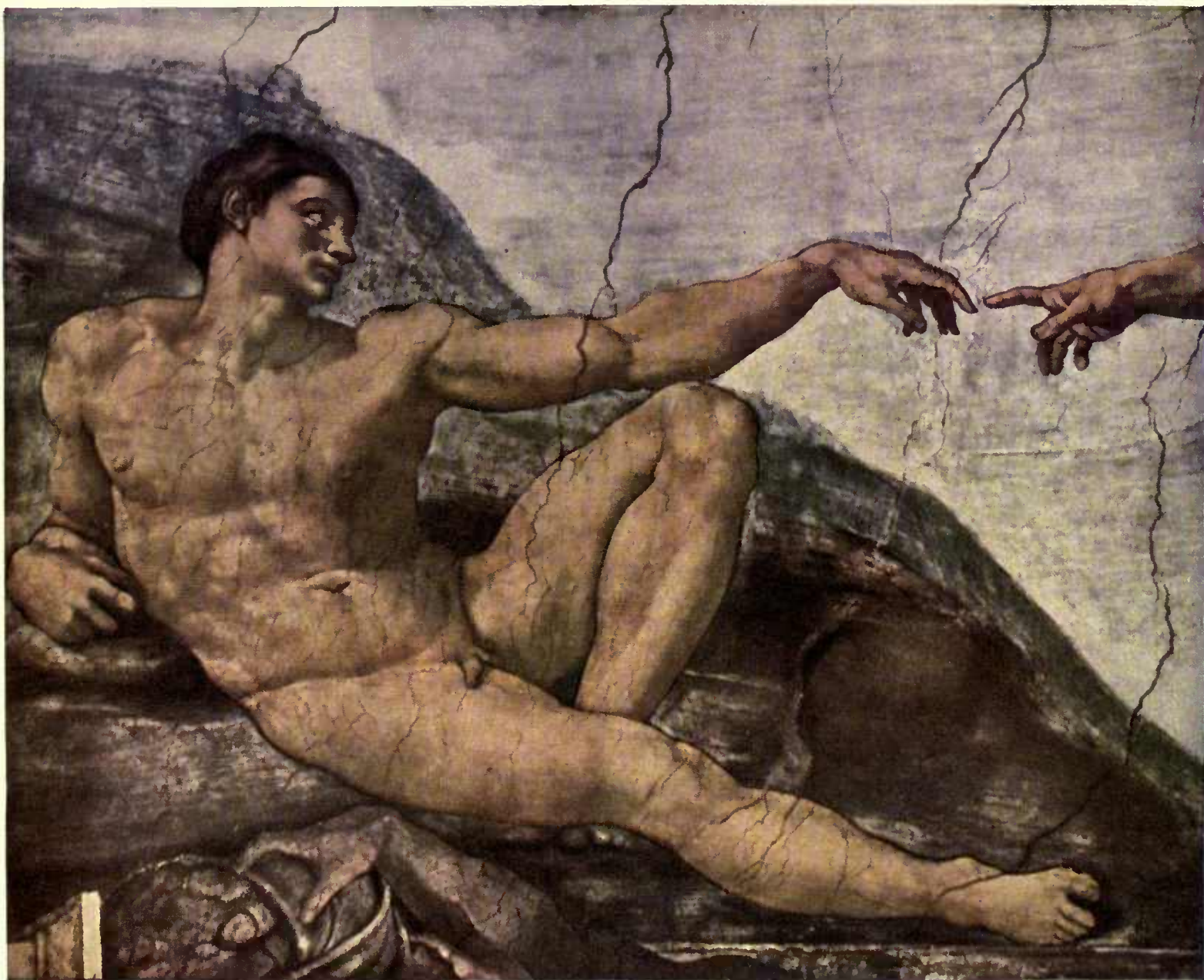
PAOLO VERONESE
1528-1588
Italy
Rebecca at the Well
Drawing (attributed)
County Museum
Los Angeles



LEONARDO DA VINCI 1452-1519 *Italy* Self-Portrait. Sanguine on white paper. Academy Museum, Venice



LEONARDO DA VINCI 1452-1519 *Italy* Mary (Detail from the Madonna in the Grotto)
About 1483 Oil. Louvre, Paris



MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI 1475-1564 *Italy* Adam. About 1510
Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Vatican

GIORGIONE (Giorgio BARBARELLI) 1478-1510 *Italy* The Three Wise Men. (Detail) About 1506
Oil. Museum of Art, Vienna





LEONARDO DA VINCI 1452-1519 *Italy* St. Anne. About 1501 Oil. Louvre, Paris



ALBRECHT DURER 1471-1528 *Germany* Head of an Apostle 1508
Charcoal on green paper. Albertina, Vienna



TINTORETTO (Jacopo Robusti) 1518-1594 *Italy* Bacchus and Ariadne 1578
Oil. Ducal Palace, Venice

of Lust", and his grotesques, bordering often on phantasmagoria, and in the grey monochromes of the "Temptation of Saint Anthony".

Bosch's monsters struck the popular imagination, and he was known as "the creator of devilments". Some people have seen a connection between his work and the confraternities of mystics who tried to infuse new life into Christianity by reforming society and attacking the corruption of the clergy. The art of this visionary who has mastered the portrayal of terror, whom his contemporaries looked on as a moralist, and in whom people later saw only a humorist and entertainer, reveals the restlessness, the nightmarish quality which was still a part of fifteenth century life. (pls. 78, 79)

Apart from these well-known painters, there were many anonymous artists in Flanders who painted the familiar details of their tranquil day-to-day existence with the same bourgeois realism. In "The Nativity", an anonymous Antwerp master places the Virgin on a bed covered with golden brocade, in a luxuriant landscape backed with gold. (pl. 33)



ANGELO BRONZINO 1507-1572 *Italy* Portrait of Andrea Ranieri Quarantesi
Bistre. British Museum, London



TINTORETTO
(Jacopo ROBUSTI)
Study for Eve
Black crayon
on green paper
Uffizi Gallery,
Florence



MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI
1465-1564 *Italy*
Study of a Figure
for the Last Judgment
Sanguine
Academy Museum, Venice

At the dawn of the fifteenth century, the great advance which France had made in painting was interrupted by historical events – the military defeats, the English occupation, and the madness of Charles VI. In 1415, Paris had been replaced as the artistic capital of France by the provincial cities. Under the patronage of rich Maecenas's, the Duc de Berry and King René of Provence, two important artistic centres had been created – at Bourges, with its Val de Loire school of painters, and at Aix and Avignon, with the painters of Provence. Allied to the political upheavals, new techniques, tastes and methods of illustration also contributed to this transformation of France.

Although the reredos and the polyptychs were still commissioned by the municipalities and confraternities, easel-painting had progressed – to be seen in the portrait of John the Good attributed to Girard d'Orléans, which was painted at the end of the fifteenth century. (pl. 17) The artists seem to have been particularly sensitive to the popular mood about the political disasters, for they often imbue their religious paintings with the sadness and hopelessness of the times. But they never gave up painting contemporary life, and there are many portraits of the leading personalities of fifteenth century France.

Provence was governed by "Good King René", a Maecenas, a humanist and a poet, who embellished his capital at Aix and turned the neighbouring Avignon into an artistic shrine. That the subjects were still primarily religious, commissioned by local bourgeois, is attested by the reredos of the "Annunciation" at Aix, painted for the clothier Corpuci. The intense religious feeling in Provence is shown in the "Pietà" of Avignon, represented on a golden background with the Holy City seen in the distance. The human figures are thrown into relief by the strong lighting, which reveals all the details of the sculptural drawing – the bowed body of Christ, the suppliant hands of the Virgin, her expression of repressed melancholy – all these belong to the religious spirit of Provence.

A very different impression is obtained from the "Coronation of the Virgin" by Enguerrand Charonton, in the museum of the alms-house of Villeneuve-les-Avignon. (pls. 32, 56) This artist who was born in Picardy, but who worked in Avignon, has here endowed the Virgin with two distinct qualities. She is at once the Virgin Triumphant who has conquered Evil, and the Virgin Protectress, who shelters the entire world, secular and spiritual under her wings. This type of Virgin Protectress was often painted in the sixteenth century, as a defence against the plague and epidemics. Its composition is, all the same, unusual. The Virgin Queen is being crowned by God the Father and God the Son, enthroned in a cloudless sky, amid an assembly of carefully drawn onlookers. The composition and draughtmanship recall the fourteenth century miniaturists.

Provençal art, in particular its sculptural qualities in the "Pietà" of Avignon, is to be found outside the boundaries of France, in 1500 A.D., in Catalonia: e.g. in the retable of "Saint Cugat" of Barcelona. (pl. 72)

Fouquet has shown us that the duc de Berry created a centre for the arts (and the principal centre of painting in France), at his capital Bourges on the banks of the Val de Loire. Fouquet, who was born at Tours, and who travelled in Italy before settling in his native town, became the undisputed master of French painting and illuminated design in the Middle Ages. A portrait painter to the court, he has left us the unforgettable picture of Charles VII and the nobility (Juvenal des Ursins and



PETER BRUEGHEL THE ELDER About 1525-1569 *Flanders* The Procession of Epileptic Women, Drawing

Etienne Chevalier), and of the king's mistress, Agnes Sorel, "the woman of beauty" whom he uses as a model for his "Virgin and Child". If one considers the pious society of the time, he is surely *risqué* here, for he paints the Virgin as a modern woman, tall and slender, with a slightly protruding forehead, a high bosom, and well-rounded, clearly separated breasts. Italian and Flemish influence are nicely balanced, in both the composition and the life-like effect. (pl. 64)

To conclude – this period of fifteenth century court life is distinguished by a love of display, lavish theatrical entertainments, royal *entrées* and splendid tourneys – as in the illuminated manuscripts of the "King at Arms Proclaiming the Tourney". (pl. 83)

In the absence of a proper court life, Germany could not, like Flanders and Italy, offer a favourable environment for artists. Politically a collection of individual towns, it was, artistically, a collection of so many schools of art, each dominated by the local bourgeois and their guilds. German painting reveals a society concerned chiefly with religious subjects, minutely observed contemporary costumes, and interior decoration – as in the "Still Life". (pl. 90). As in other countries, portrait painting also progressed, taking on its own German character, (although the German painters never forgot that nature must also be represented).

Conrad Witz, who was influenced by Van Eyck and the Burgundian masters, settled in Basel in 1431, where he obtained the right of citizenship four years later.

The Early Renaissance in Germany



ANDREA DEL SARTO 1486-1531 *Italy* Study of Heads
Sanguine. Louvre, Paris



ALBRECHT DURER 1471-1528 *Germany* Portrait of an Architect
Charcoal on blue paper. State Museum, Berlin



RAFFAELLO
SANZIO
1483-1520 *Italy*
Study of the
Transfiguration
Sanguine
Louvre, Paris



BALDASSARRE PERUZZI 1481-1536 *Italy* Study of Masks
Sanguine. Uffizi Gallery, Florence

He left Basel in 1443 to work for François de Miez, the titular bishop of Geneva, where he painted the reredos of Saint Pierre, with the celebrated panels of "The Rescue of Saint Pierre" and the "Miraculous Catch", which shows German landscape painting at its best.

Francke, who is noted for his more dramatic treatment of religious scenes, was born in Hamburg. He alone could have painted the "Suffering Christ" in the Hamburg Kunsthalle, with its tragedy of the Passion, the moral and physical suffering,

the emaciated features, the bleeding wound in his side, the clenched fists, the stiffened limbs. (pl. 47)

Iconographic painting throughout the ages has always depicted the many divinities and saints to whom the faithful have turned when they required intercession on behalf of their various illnesses and pains. Courtly art was the fashion, as we see in the retable of "Saint George", where an anonymous painter shows the saint rescuing a princess. (pl. 34)

The fifteenth century notion that human existence is no more than a march towards the grave is seen in the iconographic painting of the "Virtues and Vices", as well as in the importance attached to the *danse macabre*. The idea of death, so dear to the fifteenth century, had been promulgated by the sermons of the mendicant monks who, for over a hundred years, had taught people to live their lives in its shadow, inspired by the example of the Passion and the mystery plays. The artists gave this pictorial form, representing human beings in all their sartorial finery dancing with their skeletons.

*The Classical
Renaissance
in Italy*

If the art of the early Renaissance was essentially Florentine, that of the classical Renaissance was Roman; for great urban and architectural developments had taken place in the city of the Church. Together with the easy morals, pleasures and amusements of the courtisans, a literary and strongly humanist movement flourished in Rome, causing Erasmus to write in 1515, "I can conceive of no greater happiness than to return to Rome".

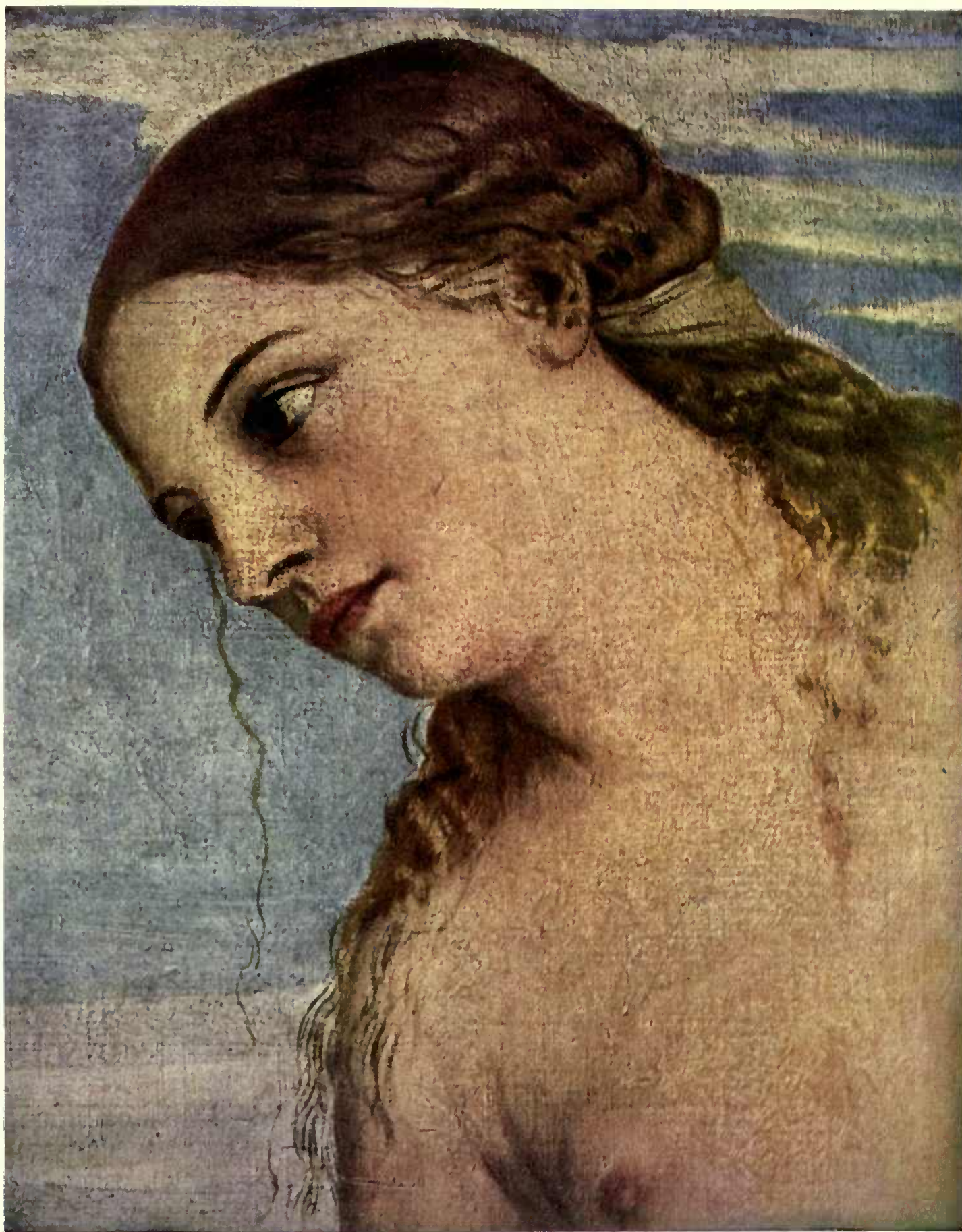
At the end of the fifteenth century, the great painters of the Florentine and Umbrian schools, Michelangelo and the young Raphael, were called to Rome by the art-loving Popes to decorate the Sistine chapel and the *stanze* of the Vatican.

Under the influence of the classical past, artists living in Rome abandoned the more intimate, domestic studies of the north in favour of grandeur and ceremony. The expressions on the faces of their subjects, the flowing robes, the settings amid noble ruins, all attest to the "grand manner" of the *Cinquecento*.

This classical style extended to Florence in the sixteenth century, where its chief exponent, Andrea del Sarto, was inspired in his famous "Madonna of the Harpies" by both Leonardo and Raphael. The perfection of one simple detail in this picture, the drawing of the left hand, explains why Vasari describes it in 1550 as "faultless". Andrea del Sarto also shows his brilliance as a landscape painter in "Filippo Benozzi", in the church of the Annunciata in Florence. (pl. 116)

Bernardino Luini, a Lombard with a more powerful personality than that of del Sarto, painted large-scale, animated scenes. His sketches show how Leonardo's caricatures influenced him, (pl. 100) as did the grimacing expressions of the fawns of Baldassarre Peruzzi, the Siennese architect and painter. (pl. 119)

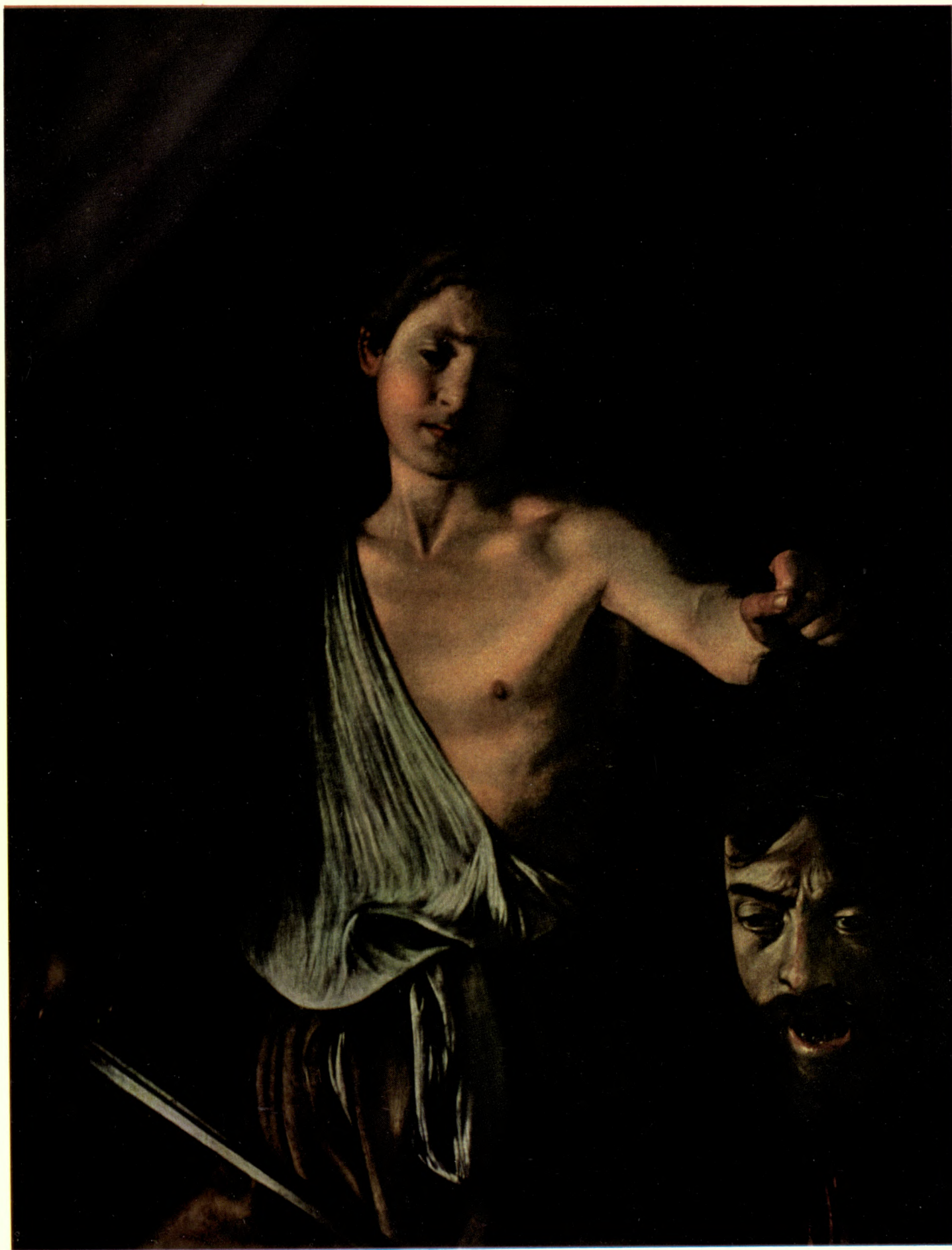
After the sack of Rome in 1527, Venice became the chief artistic centre of Italy – with its combination of religious and municipal pageantry, its dogal palaces and light, elegant architecture along the Grand Canal. Here at the meeting place of the great trade routes, to the Cape and the New World, with its society of patricians, rich merchants and well-dressed women, Venice was the most prosperous and cosmopolitan city in Italy. The twin worlds, of luxury and humanism, rubbed shoulders, and it was with "infinite joy" that the great Venetian painters reproduced their wonderful visions on wall and canvas.



TITIAN About 1485-1576 *Italy* Celestial Love. Detail. About 1512-15 Oil. Villa Borghese, Rome



TITIAN About 1485-1576 *Italy* Bacchanal. Detail 1519
Oil. Prado Museum, Madrid



CARAVAGGIO (Michelangelo MERISI) 1573-1610 *Italy* David and Goliath. About 1600
Oil. Borghese Gallery, Rome



CARAVAGGIO (Michelangelo MERISI) 1573-1610 *Italy*
The Appointment of the Apostle Matthew. About 1595
Oil. San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome



BERNARDO GATTI
1495-1576 *Italy*
Study
of an Apostle
Pen and
black crayon
on blue and bistre
Ashmolean
Museum,
Oxford

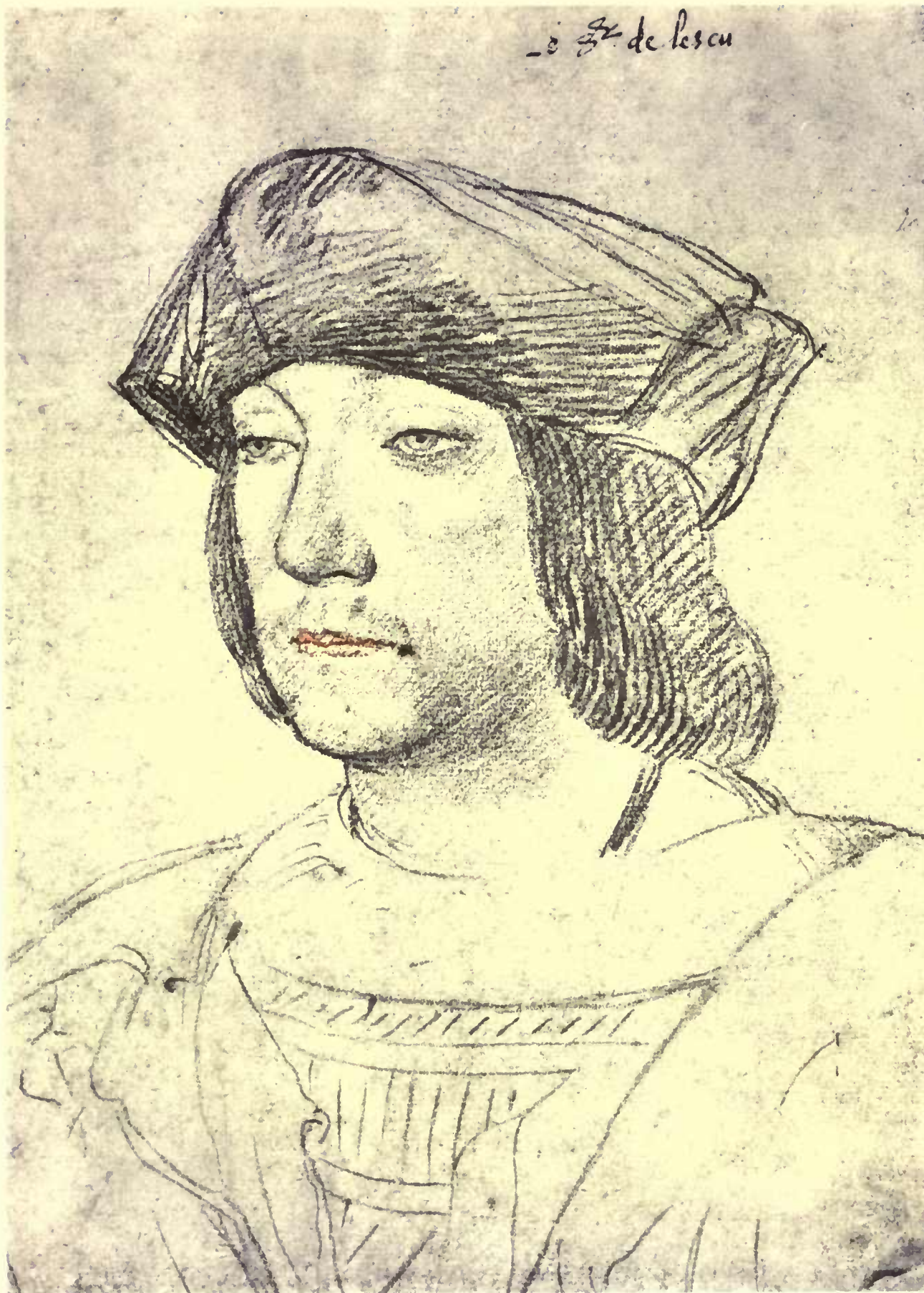


RAFFAELLO SANZIO 1483-1520 *Italy* Portrait of the Pope Julius II
Bistre. Corsini Gallery, Florence



GIACOMO CAVEDONI 1577-1650 *Italy* Study of a Bishop
Bistre. Uffizi Gallery, Florence





▲ JEAN CLOUET About 1485-1540 France Portrait of Odet de Foix (1515)
 Sanguine and black crayon. Condé Museum, Chantilly
 LUCAS CRANACH THE YOUNGER 1515-1586 Germany
 Portrait of the Princess Elisabeth of Saxe
 Watercolour. Museum of Drawings, Berlin



ANTHONY VAN DYCK 1599-1641 *Netherlands* Study of St. Sebastian,
Black crayon on blue paper. Fritz Lugt Collection, The Hague



VELASQUEZ (Diego Rodriguez de Silva y) 1599-1660 *Spain* Portrait of a Girl
Black crayon on blue paper. British Museum, London



ANONYMOUS 1588-1602 *France* Portrait of Emmanuel Philippe de Lorraine
Sanguine. Condé Museum, Chantilly



ANONYMOUS 16th Century France The Battle of Marignano
Watercolour. Condé Museum, Chantilly

According to Vasari, Giorgione, who was born at Castelfranco, was the founder of the Venetian school. He had been a student of Giovanni Bellini, whose influence is to be seen in the "Retable of Castelfranco". But the true Giorgione, with all his magical feeling for atmosphere and space, is best seen in the celebrated "Tempest", which possesses that strange luminosity to be found again in his picture of the Magi interrogating the stars, known as "The Philosophers of Vienna". (pls. 60, 107)

Giorgione's pupil Titian reveals the eternal qualities of Venetian painting already given it in the fifteenth century by Giovanni Bellini. Thanks to his association with the great princes of the day, Francis I, Charles V of Austria (who accorded him the title of a Count Palatinate), Pope Paul III, (who received him in Rome) and many other Italian Maecenas's, he acquired international fame. His youthful work is remarkable for his attempt to combine a philosophical message – in the personalities of his subjects – with their material and sumptuous surroundings. In a series of mythological or pagan fables commissioned by the Duke of Ferrara, as well as in the "Venus of Urbino", (pls. 121, 122) Titian reveals his deep feeling for natural beauty.

For sheer output and inventive power, Tintoretto resembles Titian. Jacopo



FRANCESCO PRIMATICCIO (LE PRIMATICE) 1504-1570 Italy, France

Robusti, the son of a dyer (hence his nick-name, 'Tintoretto'), was brought up in Venice with Titian and Paris Bordone. On a visit to Rome he was influenced as they were by the work of Michelangelo, and his vast output includes religious paintings, portraits and pagan scenes. That he differs from Titian in certain respects, notably in his *chiaroscuro* and foreshortening, is to be seen in the Room of the Grand Council, Venice, in his vision of Paradise, and in the Bacchanals, "Bacchus and Ariadne", (pl. 110) painted in 1588. Towards the end of his life, he worked with a freer technique, using broader brush-strokes, on the great ceiling mural glorifying Venice. (pls. 95, 112)

Paul Veronese, one of the last of the great Venetians (his real name was Paolo Caliari), was primarily a decorator of religious, mythological and allegorical subjects, to which he gave a theatrical quality of his own, as in the "Triumph of Venus" in the



François I and the Nymphs of Fontainebleau. Louvre, Paris

Dogal Palace, and in the "Victory of Lepanto". He painted a number of solemn works for the refectory rooms of Venetian convents, but his lack of any real meditative or reflective power sometimes leads him into a kind of artistic clowning, bordering often on the obscene. This perhaps explains why the famous "Dinner at the House of Levy" was censured by the Inquisition, and the artist forced to suppress a part of it. (pls. 103, 137)

When Francis I came to the throne, he was already a lover of Italy, which he had seen on his campaigns. He now had only one wish – to emulate the great art patrons of Italy. He therefore summoned Leonardo to Amboise in 1516; and Andrea del Sarto, who painted the "Charity" before returning to Florence to buy certain

The Classical Renaissance in France



DANIEL RABEL 1571-1637 *France* Entrance of the "Esperlucattes"
Watercolour. Louvre, Paris

pictures for him (a mission del Sarto did not fulfill). Francis I founded his famous collections and summoned a further group of artists, among them Primaticcio and Rosso, to decorate the château of Fontainebleau. In this, he was merely continuing the work of his royal predecessors, for Louis XII and Charles VIII had entrusted Italian artists with the decoration of their châteaux in Touraine.

But after 1530, all his artistic efforts were concentrated on Fontainebleau with its brilliant court and beautiful women. Our knowledge of the life there derives today from the château itself, as well as from the many portraits by these artists. The paintings of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" and the "Battle of Marignano" (pl. 133) illustrate the love of pomp and ceremony which Francis I had acquired on his military excursions.

After his captivity in Spain, the king lived at Fontainebleau, where Rosso was rejoined by Primaticcio. This painter and decorator (Primaticcio's real name was Francesco Bologna) had been a pupil and assistant of Giulio Romano. He specialised in delicate stucco and mythological scenes, as in the "Ball Room". He has also left a number of studies in sanguine and wash, sketches for his decorative designs: "Francis I and the Nymphs of Fontainebleau" is a charming combination of allegory and real life. (pls. 134, 135)



PAOLO VERONESE 1528-1588 *Italy* Dinner at the House of Levy (Detail, Self-Portrait)
Oil. Academy Museum, Venice



PETER PAUL RUBENS 1577-1640 *Belgium* The Rape of the Daughters of Leukippos. About 1618
Oil. Pinakothek, Munich



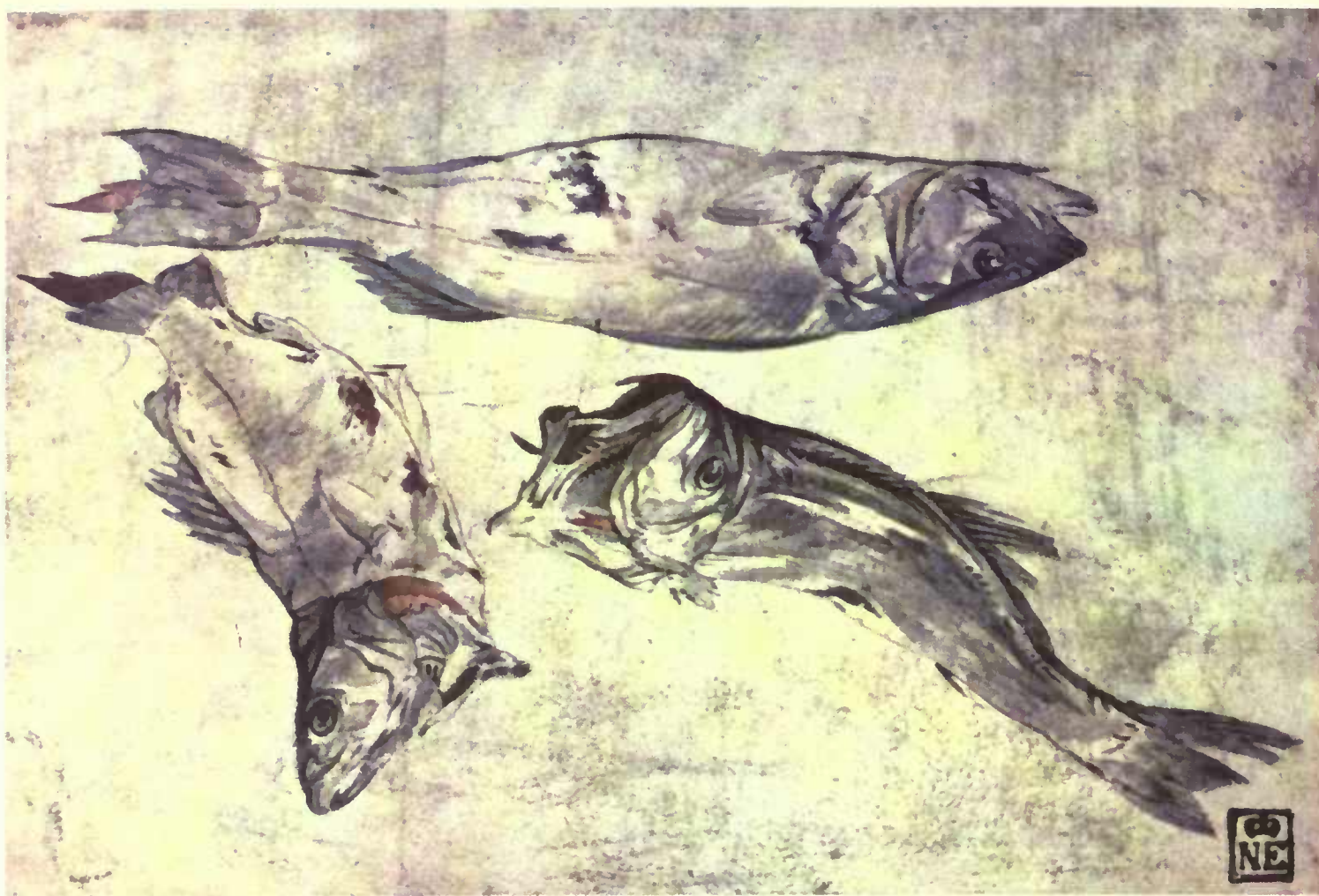
ANTHONY VAN DYCK 1599-1641 *Netherlands* Charles I of England
Oil. Louvre, Paris



PETER PAUL RUBENS 1577-1640 *Flanders* Self-Portrait with His Wife Isabelle Brandt (1600)
Oil. Pinakothek, Munich



PETER PAUL RUBENS 1577-1640 *Flanders* Child Learning to Walk
Bistre. Louvre, Paris



H. H. HOFFMANN 1584-1600 *Austria* Still Life. Watercolour. Museum of Art, Budapest

The decoration of Fontainebleau was an immense undertaking, and Primaticcio enlisted the help of other artists, among them the Italians Nicolò dell'Abate and Luca Penni, and the Frenchmen Antoine Caron and Jean Cousin, both of whom were influenced by Italian art, and by the contemporary fashion for the nude. They painted a series of allegorical portraits of beautiful women, in the nude or partially clothed, at their toilette or in their baths, of which the portraits of Gabrielle d'Estrée and the Duchess of Villars are famous, as is the portrait of Diane de Poitiers of the Basel Museum. (pl. 146) She has a German counterpart by Lucas Cranach. (pl. 147) Clouet was really too French for this kind of work, but that he was tempted by it can be seen in his portrait of Diane de Poitiers, Henry III's mistress.

The reign of Francis I thus coincides in art with "the reign of the portrait". The pencil was then the equivalent of our photographs, and from the end of the fifteenth century onward, the *pointe d'argent* alone was employed; although after 1520, drawing with three pencils came into fashion. We thus possess a complete gallery of paintings depicting men and women of Francis I's court, in each of which the character of the sitter is clearly defined, more attention being paid to the facial expressions than to the costumes.

The two Clouets, both painters-in-ordinary to the king, were the foremost French



HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER 1497-1543 Germany Portrait of Prince Edward
Watercolour. Museum of Art, Basel

exponents of this form of portraiture. Jean Clouet, who was also the royal valet, painted some hundred and twenty of these portraits, among them "Odet de Foix" in charcoal and sanguine, (pl. 129) Queen Claude, the Dauphin François, and Madame Lestrangé. Jean's son François Clouet, known as Jeanet and trained by his father, succeeded him at the court, where he later painted François's successors. That he was the leading portrait painter of the time is proved by the praise of Ronsard; "paint for me, Jeanet, paint for me, I beseech thee, all the charms of my beloved". His technique is more delicate than his father's, particularly in the treatment of the face and expression. "Of great finesse", they are carefully modelled in *chiaroscuro*, and the additional elaborate details of costume do not detract from what is essentially facial portraiture, both in the case of adults and children. Examples of this are his "Diane de Poitiers as an Old Woman", "Marguerite de Valois at the Age of Eight", and the full-length portrait of Henry II.

The school of Clouet continued until the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the work of François Quesnel who was much in favour under Henry III and Henry IV (whose portrait he painted). During the reign of Henry IV, the celebrated Dumonstier family was also at work, of whom the leading members, Pierre and Daniel, are known for their broad luminous effects as in the portrait of Françoise Hésèque and the self-portraits. Another well-known portraitist was Lagneau who, unlike his contemporaries, preferred to take his subjects from the peasantry (see his portrait of an "Old Woman", pl. 152) Withered features, furrows and wrinkles are typical of his portraiture. Throughout the sixteenth century many anonymous artists painted these "stereotyped" portraits, as of Emmanuel Philippe of Lorraine and Madame de Savoy. (pls. 96, 98, 99)

PETER BRUEGHEL THE ELDER About 1525-1569 *Flanders* The Blind People. About 1568
Oil. Pinakothek, Naples





PETER BRUEGHEL THE ELDER About 1525-1569 *Flanders* Adoration of the Wise Men. About 1564
Oil. National Gallery, London



SCHOOL OF FONTAINEBLEAU 16th Century *France* Portrait of Diana de Poitiers. About 1540
About 1540. Oil. Museum of Art, Basel



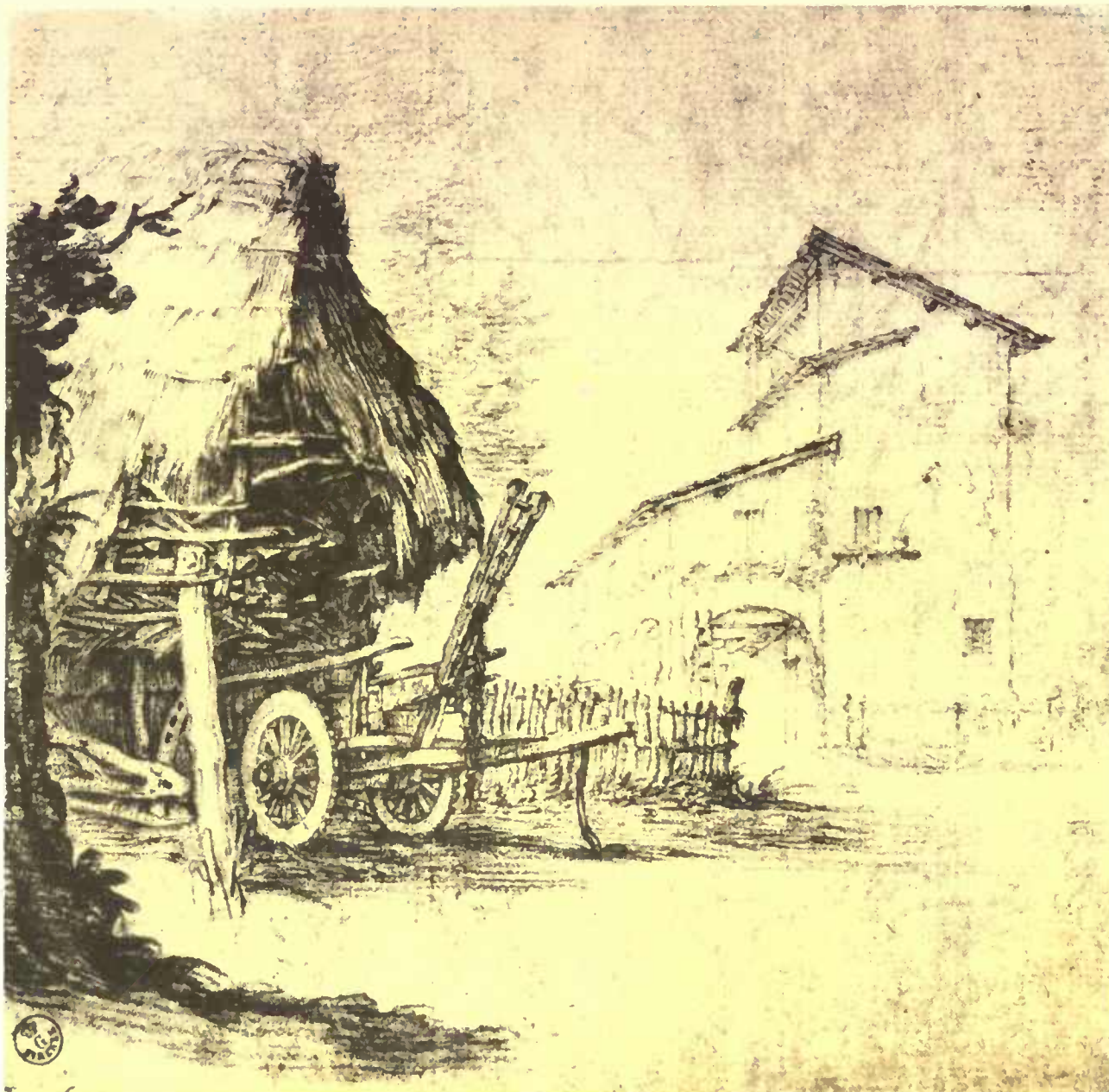
LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER (1472-1553) Germany Nude. Oil. Museum of Art and History, Geneva



LA TOUR (Georges DUMESNIL de) (1593-1652) *France* St. Francis in Ecstasy
Oil. Mans Museum

▷
CORNELIUS DUSART (1660-1740) *Netherlands* Peasant
Black crayon and sanguine. Budapest Museum





JACQUES CALLOT 1592-1635 *France* Study of a Landscape
Bistre. Uffizi Gallery, Florence

At the end of the sixteenth century a second school of Fontainebleau appears, a continuation really of the first which had gone into eclipse after the death of Catherine de' Medici and Primaticcio. Under the patronage of Henry IV, Nicolò dell'Abate brought together a group of French and Flemish artists, who gave new life to the school. Its best known exponents are Du Breuil, Freminet and Jean Boucher, whose mythological paintings, the heads of fawns and nymphs, still reveal the influence of Primaticcio.

*Germany During
the Reformation*

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Germany was a land of spiritual and social unrest, caused partly by the reforms of Luther, partly by the insurrections of

the knights and the peasants. The Edict of Augsburg in 1530 was followed by the domination of Charles V, and Germany, ever a prey to the rivalries of petty principalities, was once again ravaged. But this could not prevent the emergence of a series of painters who depicted the religious and social discontents of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in a masterly manner.

In the polyptych of Isenheim, commissioned in 1510 by the convent of the Antonites, Mathias Grunewald is a realist and a visionary at once. The centre-piece of his "Crucifixion" (in the Colmar museum) is supported by six panels, of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Lamentation, and three scenes from the life of Saint Anthony. A feeling of misery and bloated decay bordering almost on sadistic pleasure characterises this painting, in which the curious lighting gives a hallucinatory effect. (pl. 80)

The birth of Albrecht Dürer is a capital date in the history of painting. Taught by his father, a goldsmith, he worked in the studios of Michael Wolgemut where he was influenced by the engravings and designs of Schongauer and Mantegna. His two "Passions", one a large-scale work, the other smaller, together with his picture of "Melancholy", immediately gave a European importance to the graphic arts in Germany.

CESARE PROCACCINI 1570-1625 *Italy* Two Dogs and a Cat
Drawing. Academy Museum, Venice





LAGNEAU End of 16th Century *France* Portrait of an Old Woman
Black crayon and sanguine. Esterhazy Collection, Budapest



VELASQUEZ (Diego Rodriguez de SILVA y) 1599-1660 *Spain* Portrait of Infant Balthazar Carlos. About 1634
Oil. Prado Museum, Madrid



EL GRECO
(Domenico
THEOTOKOPOULOS
1541-1614 *Spain*
St. Martin
and the Beggar
1599
Oil
National Gallery
Washington



EL GRECO (DOMENICO THEOTOKOPOULOS) 1541-1614 *Spain* Storm over Toledo
Oil. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



NICOLAS POUSSIN 1594-1665 France Bacchanals. About 1640 Oil. National Gallery, London



LOUIS LE NAIN 1593-1648 *France*. *The Chariot*. About 1641 Oil. Louvre, Paris



ALBERT CUYP 1620-1691 *Netherlands Shepherds and Cows by the River*. About 1660
Oil. National Gallery, London



REMBRANDT (Harmenszoon Van Rijn) 1606-1669 *Netherlands* Landscape with Fishermen Oil. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



JAN STEEN 1626-1679 *Netherlands* Skittle Players in Front of the Inn. About 1650
Oil. National Gallery, London



FRANS HALS 1548-1666 *Netherlands* Dutch Cavalier 1624 Oil. Wallace Collection, London



GERARD TERBORCH About 1608-1681 *Netherlands* The Fatherly Warning. About 1665 Oil. State Museum, Berlin

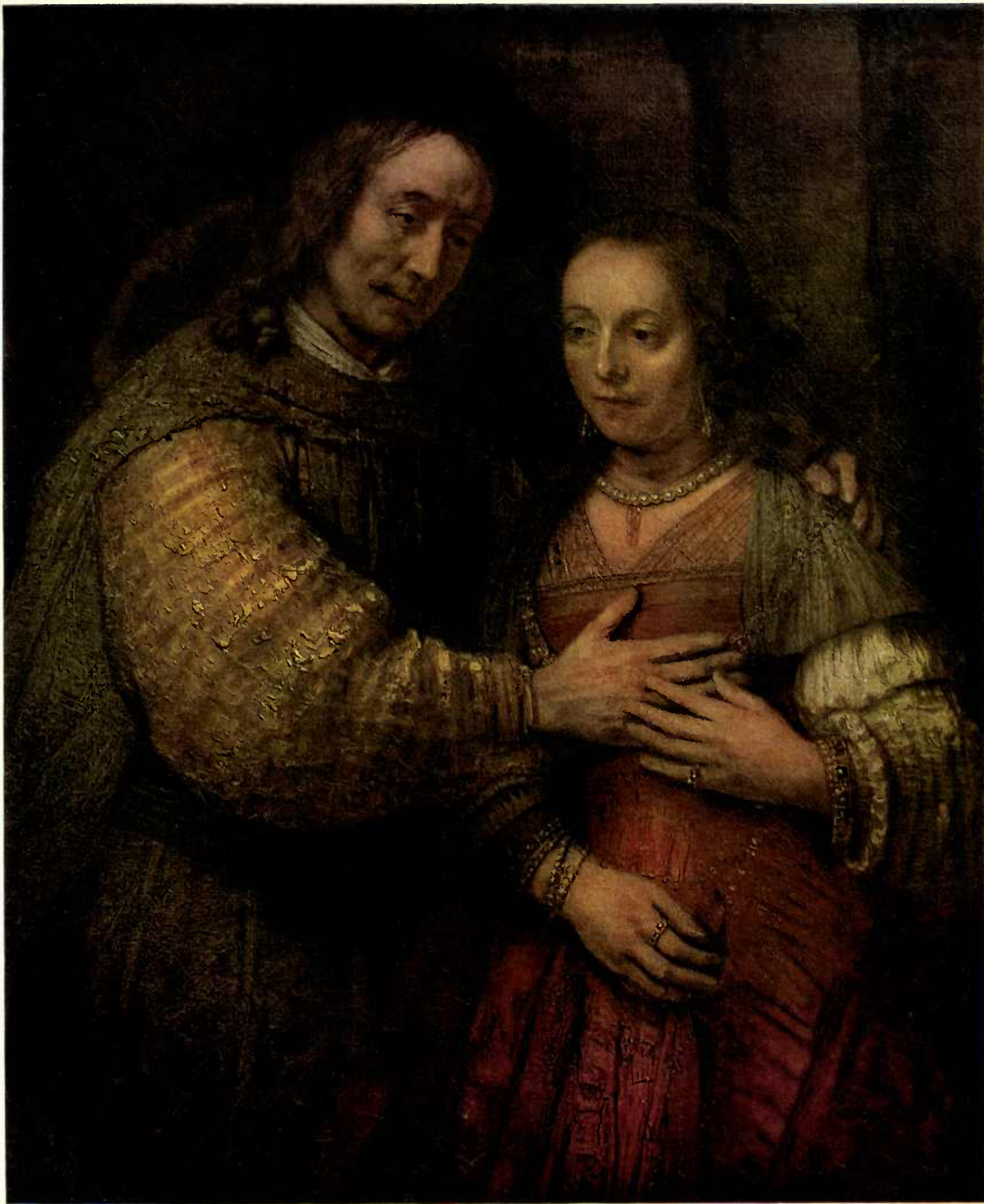


JAN VERMEER OF DELFT 1632-1675 *Netherlands* Little Street in Delft
Oil. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



REMBRANDT (Harmenszoon Van Rijn) 1606-1669 *Netherlands* Self-Portrait. 1660
Oil. Louvre, Paris

REMBRANDT (Harmenszoon Van Rijn) 1606-1669 *Netherlands*
Portrait of Bridal Couple. Detail. About 1665 Oil. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam





MEINDERT HOBBEEMA 1638-1709 *Netherlands* The Avenue of Middelharnis 1689 Oil. National Gallery, London



JEAN ANTOINE WATTEAU 1684-1721 *France* Embarkation to Cythera. About 1717 Oil. State Museum, Berlin



JEAN ANTOINE WATTEAU 1684-1721 *France*
The Signboard of Gersaint. Detail. 1720
Oil. Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin



JACOB DE WIT 1695-1754 *Netherlands* Allegory
Watercolour. Museum of Art, Budapest

His early travels took him to Italy, where he painted delicate water-colours as Arco, in southern Tyrol. In 1495 he returned to Nuremberg and opened a studio. A subsequent visit to Venice was important for his development, because he saw for the first time the great masters, as is revealed in his "Madonna with Canary", "The Virgin with Rosary", and his sketches on *carta tinta*, including the portrait of an architect, the head of an apostle and his study for Saint Barbara. In 1509 he



FRANCESCO GUARDI 1712-1793 *Italy*. The Church of Santa Maria della Salute, Venice
Black chalk and bistre. Boymans Museum, Rotterdam

worked for the emperor depicting him as a conquering hero. He then went to the Low Countries where he kept his famous diary. That he sympathised with the Lutheran movement is shown in his great dyptich of the Four Apostles, commissioned by the town council of Nuremberg in 1528. He remained essentially a portraitist, as the many self-portraits, and the pictures of his great contemporaries reveal. (pls. 71, 75, 109, 117)

Albrecht Altdorfer reacted to the tremendous influence of Dürer's landscapes and his preference for small pictures – in his exquisite landscape "View of the Danube", with its remarkable lighting effects, and the feeling in the distance of the countryside being almost on fire. (pl. 91)

Lucas Cranach was a different kind of German artist, as his interest in the nude shows. A mannered quality is to be felt in his work, particularly in the subjects borrowed from antiquity. He worked at the Saxon court from 1505, and decorated the apartments of honour for the Elector with portraits and religious painting, while directing a studio of religious art at the same time. Much influenced by the humanists,



AUGUSTIN DE SAINT AUBIN 1736-1807 *France* The Ball at St. Cloud
Chinese ink and bistre. Louvre, Paris



GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO 1696-1770 *Italy* The Minuet. Ca' Rezzonico, Venice

he dealt with mythological subjects, Venuses, and the "Judgement of Paris". In the last, his landscape is populated with slender naked figures wearing ornate necklaces, described as Goddesses, but who are, in fact, coquettes and demi-mondaines from the Electoral court. Some of his nudes recall the Fontainebleau beauties, "Half Nude". (pls. 74, 147)

Hans Holbein the Younger is again a different type of painter, a portraitist concerned exclusively with the exact reproduction of character. We see this in his early works as in "The Madonna of the Burgomaster Meyer". From 1515 to 1529 he worked in Basel, where Erasmus treated him as if he were his own son. He was already painting religious pictures and portraits, all of which revealed what was to come. In "Madeleine Offenburg Portrayed as Laïs of Corinth", the famous Greek courtesan is shown wearing a magnificent low-cut dress which reveals a delicately modelled bust, while her features and pellucid skin are clearly outlined against a green velvet curtain. Holbein left Basel at the beginning of the Reformation for London, where he painted German refugees and well-known Englishmen. (pls. 70, 143)

The sixteenth century still belonged to the old world, for the division of Catholic Belgium and Protestant Holland had not yet taken place. The civilising Italian influence already met in the works of Memling, Quentin Metsys and Jean van Cleve, and for which the proximity of Fontainebleau must be held partly responsible, increased towards 1521. The Flemish painters also travelled abroad more, and learned much from their foreign colleagues. Jean Gossaert went on a diplomatic mission to Rome with Philippe de Bourgogne, and other painters, such as Bernard d'Orley and his pupil Frans Floris went there in 1541.

*The
Renaissance
in Flanders*

The Madonnas of the engraver and painter Lucas of Leyden were influenced by northern Italian art, in particular by the work of the Paduan Schiavone, e.g., the "Virgin and Child" (Berlin), a half-length portrait showing his subjects against an architectural background decorated with luscious fruits. Many of his contemporaries painted in the same way, e.g. Bega Cornelis. (pls. 89, 101)

The most individual painter of the century was Peter Brueghel the Elder who, in spite of his stay in Rome, remained essentially Flemish. He painted realistic pictures of village fairs, the joys of the peasants as well as their sufferings under the Spanish occupation. In his satirical caricatures of the sick and maimed, as in the "Procession of the Epileptic Women", we sense the influence of Jerome Bosch, although his landscapes are painted on a broad scale. He can be profoundly human and moving, as in the "Parable of the Blind Men Marching to Death". The realism, poetry and sensitivity of his work justify Brueghel's reputation as the greatest Flemish master of the sixteenth century. (pls. 115, 144, 145)

BAROQUE ART

Baroque Art is an expression of the Counter-Reformation, and announces the triumph of Catholicism over paganism. It is characterised by the revival of religious art and the prohibition of the nude. It is full of dramatic effects and aims at dazzling by the interplay of light and movement, employing colour, *chiaroscuro*, oblique and diagonal perspective and foreshortening, to give the illusion of depth and distance on the many domes and ceilings of its fanciful world.



WILLIAM HOGARTH 1697-1764 *England* Lame Man in a Chair
Sanguine and white chalk on grey-green paper. Museum of Art, Budapest

The Baroque age began about 1530 after the sack of Rome and, politically speaking, finished in the seventeenth century. In fact, it continued in its Rococo form well into the eighteenth century, until the advent of neo-classicism. Its birth-place was Rome, but it appeared under various guises in the different countries which adopted it.

*Baroque Art
in Italy*

Bologna had, by the seventeenth century, become an important centre of painting, its artistic development being connected with membership of the papal states. Thanks to the Carracci family, it was the home of the Academy of Painting of the Incamminati. (Ludovico, Augustin and Hannibal Carracci).



GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO 1696-1770 *Italy* Head of a Man
Sanguine and white crayon on grey-green paper. Museum of Art, Budapest

In contrast to the eclecticism of the Carracci's, Michelangelo di Caravaggio is brutally realistic. A self-taught painter of plebeian origins, he studied in Milan, went to Rome in 1588, and fled to Naples in 1606. His "Vocation of Saint Matthew", commissioned by the church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome, shows the Saint surrounded by card-players in a tavern, or perhaps a gambling-house. He uses *chiaroscuro* to concentrate a dazzling light on some of his figures, while the others almost disappear into the shade: "David and Goliath". (pls. 123, 124)

The Baroque period flourished throughout the *Settecento*, and at Naples and Genoa, Alessandro Magnasco painted pictures in a style recalling the "*fêtes galantes*" of Watteau, as his "Meeting in an Albaro Garden". He also composed phantasies in which old soldiers, monks and other picturesque characters frolic in darkened landscapes full of ruins. (pl. 190)

In the eighteenth century it was Venice, the city of carnivals and gaiety, which adapted itself best to the Baroque spirit and kept that art alive in Italy. The exquisitely pale Venetian ladies, who smile at us from the pastels of Rosalba Carriera, descend directly from the partisans of Titian. Rosalba Carriera was the gentle painter and miniaturist of young women and children in many European towns at this period. (pl. 177)

Venetian life, its *salons*, dancing academies, coffee-houses, its many distractions, was depicted by Pietro Longhi in little paintings which seem so many illustrated diaries: "The Moorish Ambassador". (pl. 183)

Venice herself with her changing skies and canals, her *palazzi* and churches, appears majestically in the works of Canaletto and Guardi. Canaletto specialised in the every-day life of the city, and the many paintings we still possess of his give some idea of the range of his subjects, from the simplest to the most sumptuous, e.g. "The Doge's Wedding". Guardi is more concerned with the architecture of Venice and the luminous light of her lagoons, see "Santa Maria della Salute", "La Piazzetta di San Marco", and the "Canal Grande". (pls. 170, 178, 182, 193, 196)

Tiepolo is another Baroque master who concentrates on dramatic effect and figures floating in translucent space. His sketches for the "Head of a Man" show his draughtsmanship and ability to paint a likeness. In his *scènes galantes* we feel all the freshness of contemporary Venice, in "The Minuet" which combines a wonderful set of light shades of blue, pink and silver grey. In 1756 he was commissioned to decorate the Residence of the Prince Bishop of Würzburg: "Apollo's Horses". He later worked in Madrid where he became the Italian representative of Baroque. (pls. 172, 175, 186)

Spain The Golden Age

In spite of her political decadence, Spain was, between the last years of the sixteenth century and the first of the seventeenth, at her artistic peak. Madrid and Seville were the two centres – one, the city of the Hapsburg court; the other, the great Spanish commercial centre. As the birth-place of Ignatius Loyola and the cradle of both mysticism and the Inquisition, Spain was one of the European nations most receptive to the influence of the Baroque – as was revealed by her painters. Unlike the Italians, the Spaniards were seldom attracted by historical or mythological scenes, being more concerned with portraiture and religious subjects.

We see this at the end of the sixteenth century in the work of El Greco (Domenico Theotokopoulos), who was born in Greece but who, after studying in Venice,



ROSALBA CARRIERA 1675-1757 *Italy* Portrait of a Child. Pastel on light grey paper. Ermitage, Leningrad

settled in Spain. The atmosphere of mystical exaltation in his work, which had been absorbed in Toledo where he lived, shows the extent of the Spanish influence. The elongated human figures are painted in the Italian manner, but the ecstatic and spiritual expressions on the faces recall the ikons of Byzantium. (pls. 154, 155)

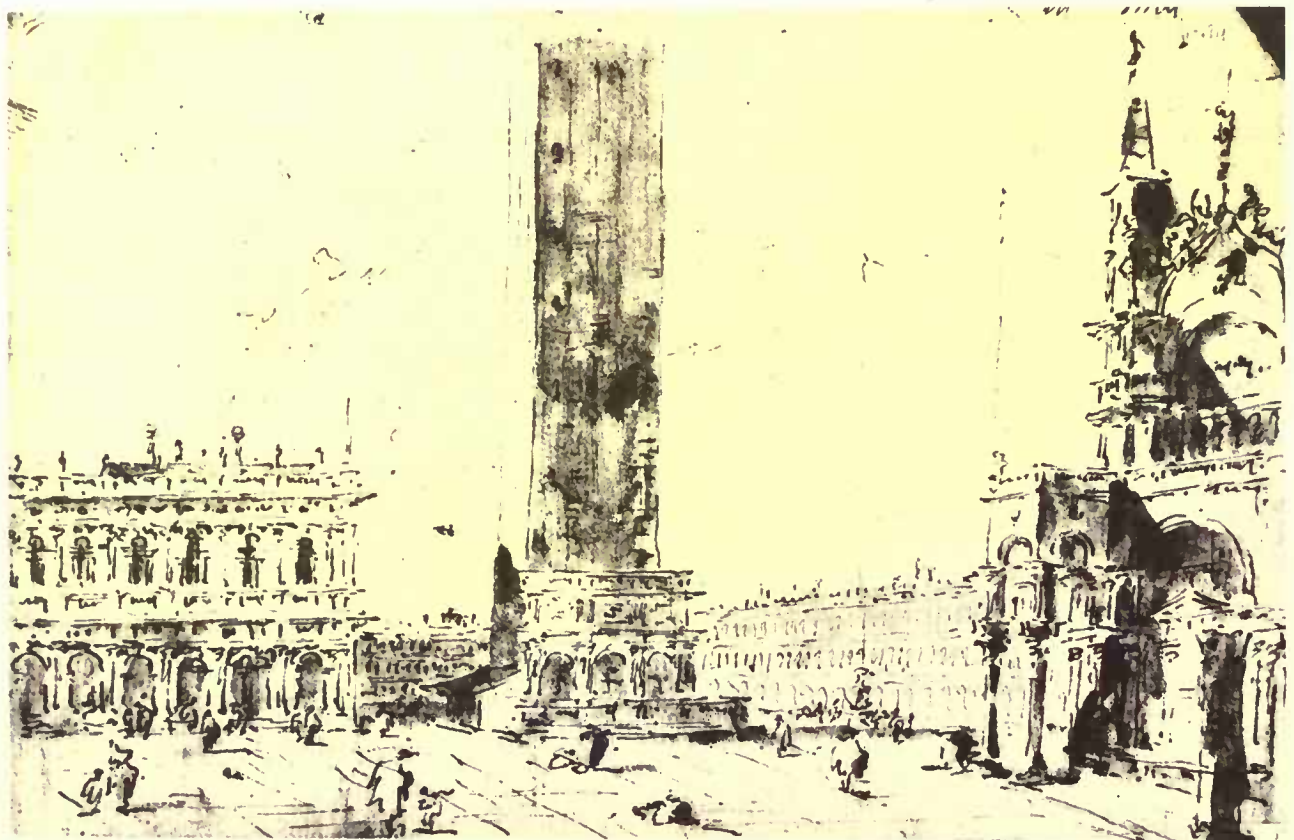
The school of Valencia was represented by José Ribera, who settled in Naples in 1615, where he became known as "*Lo Spagnoletto*". That he was "influenced by the naturalist style of Caravaggio" is seen in the strong effects of light and shade in his painting of various martyrdoms.

Velasquez's master, F. Pacheco, a portrait painter who lived in Seville, was the fashionable artist of Andalusia before Herrera. But he was later surpassed by Zurbaran, whose masterpiece is the apotheosis of Saint Thomas of Aquino.

The only painter of profane subjects was Velasquez, who had been trained in Seville before settling in Madrid, where he became the court painter. In his early work, he introduces popular realism into sociological and mythological scenes. But later, in the service of Philip IV, he turned to historical subjects and portrait painting.

In spite of the somewhat official manner of his portraits, they reveal a deep psychological insight, as in the equestrian "Philip IV", or "The Infant Carlos", on an Andalousian pony at the gallop. In the second of these, he reveals his remarkable mastery of child portrayal. But "The Meninas", with its wonderfully luminous light, and its treatment of clothing materials and laces, is his finest painting. The "chroni-

FRANCESCO GUARDI 1712-1793 *Italy* The San Marco Place
Bistre. Ca' Rezzonico, Venice





GABRIEL DE SAINT AUBIN 1724-1780 France "La Guinguette"
Bistre. Albert Meyer Collection, Paris



GABRIEL DE SAINT AUBIN 1724-1780 *France* Portrait of a Clock Maker
Black crayon and watercolour. Forsyth Wickes Collection, Rhode Island (U.S.A.)



FRANÇOIS BOUCHER 1703-1770 *France* Venus and Amor 1751
Oil. National Gallery, Washington



CANALETTO (Antonio CANALE) 1697-1768 *Italy*
The Wedding of the Doge and the Sea
Oil. Crespi Collection, Milan



PIETRO LONGHI 1702-1785 *Italy* The Moorish Ambassador
Oil. Ca' Rezzonico, Venice



JEAN HONORÉ FRAGONARD 1732-1806 *France* Inspiration
Oil. Louvre, Paris



CLAUDE GILLOT 1673-1722 France Theatre Scene
Black chalk and sanguine. Louvre, Paris

cler” of the court, Velasquez paints the grandees of Spain in the presence of their pale, anaemic children and their dwarfs and clowns. (pls. 130, 153)

As a result of the wars of religion, the historical boundaries of Flanders had been changed by the seventeenth century. The country was divided into two – on the one hand, the Catholic Low Countries attached to Spain, on the other, the Protestant land of Holland. This political and religious division was also artistic, with two conflicting styles. Catholic Belgium adopted the Baroque – to which Holland remained firmly opposed.

*The Catholic
Low Countries
in the
Seventeenth
Century*

In Peter Paul Rubens, the Baroque is even more exuberant than in the Italian painters. He studied in Antwerp, but completed his education by a long stay in Italy, from which he absorbed the Italian *joie de vivre*, and a love of colour for its own sake.

At the time of his first marriage, to Isabelle Brandt, the work of this young artist (he was also a diplomat), has much of the restrained power of the great northern bourgeois painters. But with his second marriage, to Helene Fourment – whose buxom beauty he often used as a model for Andromache and Saint Cecilia – the Baroque manner often breaks in many of his religious and mythological scenes



GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO 1696-1770 *Italy* Apollo's Horses 1751
Fresco. Würzburg Palace

(Pls. 138, 140, 141). The entire Flemish school descends from Rubens.

Van Dyck, the aristocratic painter *par excellence*, had a cosmopolitan career, thanks to his residence in Genoa and London. His Genovese patricians are the forerunners of the magnificent series of portraits of the English royalty and nobility as the fine features and proud bearing of "Charles I". We find the same subtle if slightly mannered quality of draughtsmanship in his sketches for various sacred and profane paintings (pls. 130, 139).

By the seventeenth century, Holland had evaded the clasp of Catholic Spain and freed herself from the artistic influences then current in the Flemish Low Countries. Thanks to her maritime and commercial power, she developed a national, protestant and bourgeois art, in contrast to the art of the Counter Reformation. Protestant austerity does not lend itself to religious art, and the subjects of the Dutch painters became increasingly concerned with the day to day life of the people and the local landscape. The painters were, in fact, the faithful mirrors of the life and appearance of their country.

Among a host of great painters, we can mention only the most celebrated.

Frans Hals of Haarlem reveals his genius in the direct and unaffected manner



CLAUDE LORRAIN (GELÉE) 1600-1682 France Trees
Pen on blue paper. Robert Lehman Collection, New York

of his portraits as "Dutch Cavalier". He possessed an unfailing gaiety, even in his later works dedicated to the patrons of the Haarlem alms-house, where he was to retire. (pl. 161) Jan Steen, a moralist and satirist, illustrates Dutch life with great good humour in "The Skittle Players" (pl. 160). Gerard Terborch, on the other hand, with his delicate colouring and subtle rendering of the same scenes, is in the more aristocratic tradition of Van Dyck. In his "Fatherly Warning", we see a young woman in a satin dress standing in a room near a red canopy in front of her parents, on whose faces are expressions of extreme solemnity. (pl. 162)

Jan Vermeer of Delft differs from his contemporaries in his clear colouring, and in the glaze which he borrowed from the palette of the Delft china makers, seen in the typically lively scene of the little street in Delft. (pl. 163)

The gentleness of the Dutch landscape is reflected in Ruysdael and Robert de Cuyp e.g. in the "Shepherds and Cows", a painting remarkable for the movement of the clouds and the feeling of humidity in the northern air. Hobbema in the "Avenue of Middelharnis" (pls. 158, 166) uses the perspective of the long *allée* to create an impression almost of infinity.

Rembrandt Van Rijn epitomises the whole Dutch school. He was educated



JEAN ANTOINE WATTEAU 1684-1721 *France* Nude with Lifted Arm
Sanguine and black chalk. Louvre, Paris



JEAN ANTOINE WATTEAU 1684-1721 *France*. The Game of Love
Oil. National Gallery, London



ALESSANDRO MAGNASCO 1667-1747 *Italy* Garden Party. Detail. About 1735
Oil. Palazzo Bianco, Genoa



CARLE VAN LOO 1705-1765 France. Clown Oil. Chéret Museum, Nice



WILLIAM HOGARTH 1697-1764 *England* The Graham Children 1741
Oil. Tate Gallery, London



FRANCESCO GUARDI 1712-1793 *Italy* The Canal of St. Geremia. Drawing. Ca' Rezzonico, Venice

in Holland, spent his working life in Amsterdam, and his early collective portraits belong to the tradition of Frans Hals as "The Anatomy Lesson" and "The Night Watch", in the second of which he is more daring than his predecessors, introducing that dim, eerie light which he had made his own. Religious painting was, we have said, unusual in Protestant Holland; but with Rembrandt it returns. In his parable paintings of "The Good Samaritan" and "The Prodigal Son", the models he drew from were the Jews he found in the Amsterdam ghettos, in whose portraits he again uses his wonderful lighting e.g. "Portrait of the Bridal Couple", in which he blends the vermillion of the woman's dress with the golden doublet of the young man (pls. 159, 164, 165). In Rembrandt the Dutch school reached its peak, and then made its presence felt throughout Europe, until the eighteenth century.

The Baroque influences which Holland had opposed met an even greater resistance in France. Although in the second half of the century a kind of national Baroque, the Roccoco (France's free interpretation of the classical style) arose, and although the Protestant movement had hardly touched the life of the people, artistic circles were deeply penetrated with the reformed religion.

*France in the
Seventeenth
Century*

The greatest French painter of the seventeenth century was Nicolas Poussin. After a hard life in Paris he left for Rome, where he worked until his death. His love of antiquity is revealed in his early works, all of which are marked by a certain severity; but later, a softer, more youthful quality appears, and in "Polyphemus" and "The Arcadian Shepherds" he even endows the astringent classical landscape of the Campagna with a Bacchanalian air. His human figures seem a part of the landscape, attaining in the historical compositions a classical, and in the religious ones, a mystical grandeur. (pl. 156)

His contemporary Claude Gelée, known as Lorrain, is a painter of the elegiac in the woodlands and natural beauties of his series of landscapes for the Colonna



NICOLAS DE LARGILLIÈRE 1656-1746 France Portrait of the Duke of Bourgogne
Black chalk on blue paper. Private Collection



JUAN CONCHILLOS 1641-1711 Spain Nude Man Seen from the Back
Drawing on blue paper. National Library, Madrid

and Doria galleries. He was also a fine draughtsman. (pl. 187)

Contemporary with these painters of sylvan scenes was Philippe de Champaigne, who reveals the more severe or Jansenist influence in French painting.

The brothers Le Nain specialised in a more realistic type of small-scale *genre* painting. Antoine was the traditionalist, while Louis took his subjects from rustic life e.g. "The Chariot". If his monotonous greys and browns lack lustre, the expression of austere gravity on the faces of the peasants is extremely life-like. (pl. 157)

The painter who linked the realism of the Flamands with subjects habitually chosen by Caravaggio was Georges de la Tour. He treated religious subjects as *genre* scenes in "The Prodigal Son" and "The Nativity". With none of Caravaggio's animation, he concentrates on silent, meditative expressions, as in "The Hurdy-Gurdy Man", "Saint Jerome" and "Saint Francis in Ecstasy", to which he added a curiously luminous light. (pl. 148) Among other artists who made a contribution to French art in the seventeenth century was the engraver Jacques Callot. (pl. 150) He had learnt his craft in Florence, where he had originally migrated hoping to make a fortune. He found that etching – using acids on copper plates – was a better medium for his powerful feelings than the more traditional methods of engraving.

FRANCESCO GUARDI 1712-1793 *Italy* The Grand Canal Oil. Brera Museum, Milan





JEAN ETIENNE LIOTARD 1703-1793 France Turkish Spinner.
Black crayon and sanguine. Louvre, Paris

The elegant French society of the eighteenth century patronised every form of painting – landscape, portraiture, court-life, *fêtes galantes* as well as scenes from every day life. Watteau, thanks to his familiarity with the cleverest men and prettiest women of the *salons*, gives us the best example of this. He could paint scenes from ordinary life, as in “The Signboard of Gersaint”; but his love of the theatre and the Italian *comédiennes* inspired him to paint the *fêtes galantes* for which he is famous. “The Embarkation for Cythère” was inspired by one of the Italian comedies. There is nothing perhaps in the history of painting more exquisite than the figures of the lovers in this painting, wending their way towards the galleon which is to carry them off to the enchanted isle. In the “Game of Love”, he uses the same figures in a rich and verdant landscape, but this time in the persons of young men playing mandolins. That he took such liberties in the romantic, even sentimental, choice of his subjects should not be allowed to obscure his qualities as a draughtsman. (pls. 167, 168, 188, 189)

*France in the
Eighteenth
Century*

But the finest example of this French style, in which Venus and Love occupy such a place, is seen in the work of François Boucher, the favourite painter of Madame de Pompadour. (pl. 181)

These masters of the *fêtes galantes* had many followers – Gillot (pl. 185), his pupil Lancret (pl. 200), A. Portail and Coypel. Van Loo on the other hand seems to have found these subjects too trivial, for he turned back to historical compositions, and made incursions into the domain of the operatic stage: “Clown”. (pl. 191)



PIERRE PAUL PRUD'HON 1758-1823 *France* Head of a Young Woman
Black crayon on blue paper. Vicomtesse de Noailles Collection



MARIE LOUISE VIGÉE LEBRUN 1755-1842 *France* Self-Portrait
Crayon on blue paper. Cailleux Collection



NICOLAS LANCRET 1690-1743 *France* Shepherd Reposing
Sanguine. Albertina, Vienna



THOMAS
GAINSBOROUGH
1727-1788
England
Portrait of
Mrs. Graham
Oil
National Gallery,
Edinburgh



FRANCISCO GOYA 1746-1828 *Spain* The Nude Maya 1797
Oil. Prado Museum, Madrid

FRANCISCO GOYA 1746-1828 *Spain* Blindman's Buff
Oil on cardboard. Prado Museum, Madrid





FRANCISCO GOYA 1746-1828 *Spain* Don Manuel Osorio de Zuniga 1784 Oil. Metropolitan Museum Art, of New York

Boucher's pupil, Fragonard, with his *fêtes galantes polissonnes* was the favourite of the the Italian comedians and Madame du Barry: "Inspiration" and "Portrait of an Actor". (pl. 184)

But Boucher and Greuze were only occasional portrait-painters – compared with Rigaud and Largillière, who still belonged to the century of Louis XIV. An example of their portraiture of the great men of their time is the "Portrait of the Duke de Bourgogne. (pl. 194)

The Goncourts described the eighteenth century as "the century of the *vignette*", a claim supported by the many minor masters who have given us the minutiae of Parisian bourgeois life. Gabriel and Augustin de St Aubin are their finest representatives. (pls. 171, 179, 180)

At the end of the eighteenth century came Prud'hon who chose traditional subjects, but whose sensuous nature has affinities with Watteau. (pl. 198)

Thanks largely to the visit paid by artists of all countries to France, French influence in painting was all-powerful throughout Europe in the eighteenth century.

The French influence was assimilated by the English painters who suited it to the national character, producing an individual style of their own.

*England
in the
Eighteenth
Century*

William Hogarth was primarily a moralist trying to do with the brush what others did with the pen – reform society. His colloquial style often borders on caricature, as in "Lame Man in an Arm-Chair". He also satirised the private life of society. (pls. 174, 192)

Apart from the painters of social manners, there were popular portraitists such as Reynolds, the President of the Royal Academy, and Gainsborough. Gainsborough, who settled in the fashionable watering-place, Bath, in 1750, became the favourite portrait-painter of a society which came there annually to take the waters. (pl. 201) His beautiful, haughty and elegantly clad ladies are placed against romantic landscapes.

Francisco Goya's painting summarises fifty years of Spanish life. He was born in the small village of Fuentetodos, educated at Saragossa and, before settling in Madrid, he made a short trip to Italy. In his happy days, from 1776 to 1793, before he lost his hearing and became embittered, he depicts the pleasures of Madrid life in fresh and scintillating colours ("Blindman's Buff"), delightful pictures which were little more than cartoons for the tapestries to be woven at Santa Barbara. After 1780, he was the fashionable portrait-painter, and his somewhat rigid stylised figures reveal their character in the joviality of their facial expression – as in his "Portrait of a Child". But when he became deaf in 1794, he became bitter and painted the ferociously realistic portraits of Spanish grandees. At this time, while he was in love with the Duchess of Alba, he painted his sensual Mayas, "Nude Maya" and "Clothed Maya". His engravings of the "Caprices" parodying court-life date from the same period. When he was over eighty, in exile at Bordeaux, he continued painting with the same enthusiasm, using a new type of lithograph for bullfighting scenes. (pls. 202, 203, 204)

*Goya's
Spain*

Goya is a transition painter, linking the old masters to modern times; although in the Velasquez tradition, he heralds in the century of the Impressionists.

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